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HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX;

COMPRISING

A VIEW OF THE HABITS, MANNERS, AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN, AMONG ALL NATIONS, FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Translated from the German of

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HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the other Polished Nations of our Division of the Globe, during the Reign of Louis XV. of France.

According to the unanimous testimonies of all historians and observers, the manners of the French court became more and more depraved, and their baneful influence was gradually more and more extended to the capital and the provinces of the kingdom. The accounts of all travellers, who are no less unanimous, inform us, that most of the polished courts and nations of Europe copied with

increasing avidity the pomp, the diversions, and the fashions of France. This mania of imitating the French overcame, among many people, the most violent and deep-rooted national antipathy. It first seized the courts and the superior ranks, and gradually descended to the middling and the lower classes. The greatest part of Europe was more or less frenchified, and this metamorphosis continued even when the French court was for a time in such a state, that other courts could not adopt the tone which prevailed in it, as was the case in the latter years of the too devout Louis XV. At such times the city of Paris stepped into the place of the dormant court, and moved in its own orbit, by virtue of the impulsion which it had for ages received from the latter. Here were formed the illustrious and noble youth of all the countries of Europe, who thronged to Paris as to the centre of pleasure and politeness. From this point proceeded the French ambassadors, generals, and other officers, who were dispersed over all Europe, and were universally admired as accomplished gentlemen. If we would therefore investigate and sketch the history of the manners of modern times in general,

and the variations in the way of living in the public and private amusements, in luxury and fashions, or the relations between the sexes in particular, it is absolutely necessary to set out from the court and capital of France as the primary sources or general models, and to take notice how far the other courts and nations of Europe exhibit copies or imitations of these.

Of all the European nations the Spaniards were least infected by the mania of imitating the French;* though it would be natural to suppose that the very reverse had been the case, since they were governed for near half a century by a sovereign of the house of Bourbon, and a sovereign who was sincerely beloved and respected. Nature herself had made Philip V. more a Spaniard

* See *Caimo lettere d'un Viaggiatore Italiano*, I. p. 175, on the solitary pomp and arrogance of the Spanish grandees and their wives; p. 177, on their excessive filthiness at table. Also p. 188, 189, II. 67, III. 140. So late as the year 1756 the Portuguese women were shut up like slaves and worshipped like goddesses. *Ib.* III. 185, 188. They durst neither go abroad when they pleased, nor receive visitors. Men knelt before ladies and kissed their hands. This mark of respect was paid to the Portuguese females, even by ecclesiastics. *Ibid.* During the reign of Charles III. the Spanish courtiers followed the French fashions in dress. *Clarke's Letters*, p. 334. The same writer was of opinion that the ancient jealousy of the Spaniards had been laid to sleep since the accession of the Bourbons to the throne of Spain, p. 341.

than a Frenchman; and so far was he from forcing upon his people, after the fall of the princess Ursini, customs repugnant to the Spanish genius, that the longer he lived the more perfect a Spaniard he became. I should, therefore, pass over the Spanish court and the Spanish nation in silence in this chapter, had not Elizabeth, of the House of Parma, the second consort of Philip V. obliged the historian of her sex to take some notice of a princess so remarkable in many respects.

Elizabeth of Spain astonished all Europe by the resolution with which she expelled the powerful and universally dreaded princess Ursini out of the kingdom, before she had yet beheld her husband and captivated him by her charms. With equal boldness she subjugated her consort, strong in the conjugal bed, but weak in mind, and seized the reins of government.* She appointed ministers, generals, and ambassadors, raised foreigners from the dust, when they flattered her projects or favoured her views, and disgraced or chastised the most distinguished characters in Spain, when they

* *Mem. de Richelieu*, II. p. 147, 372. *Duclos*, II. p. 196, &c.

presumed to oppose her designs. The Spaniards cherished a more cordial hatred against the second wife of Philip V. than they had ever conceived for any arrogant favourite of their kings, and omitted no opportunity for manifesting their aversion. This antipathy the queen repaid with a hatred equally sincere. Neither did she dissemble that she abhorred the Spaniards with all her heart. As long as the king complied with her wishes, so long did she reward his obedience by a faithful performance of the conjugal duties; but no sooner did the king manifest a disposition to resist, than she ordered her bed, which otherwise stood close to the king's, to be removed into a corner of the royal chamber.* This circumstance, whenever it happened, excited as great a sensation at court, as if several provinces had rebelled. The queen would not submit to the embraces of her consort, till he had accommodated himself to her pleasure. The king infallibly and speedily testified his acquiescence, because he could not long endure the separation from her. He was much too pious to gratify his ruling passion,

* *Mem. de Richelieu*, II. p. 372.

the passion of love, with any other woman. He was offended even with the female attendants who brought him and the queen their chocolate in the morning, for appearing after the Spanish fashion, with their bosoms uncovered. He several times forbade them to dress in that manner, but in vain. As the king had no other way of securing himself against the sinful sight of their fair breasts, he began, as if by accident, to spill the scalding chocolate in the bosoms of those ladies who obstinately persisted in this display of their charms.* This severe remedy proved efficacious. From that time the fairest bosoms were carefully concealed.

Queen Elizabeth, of Spain, certainly belongs to the illustrious females of the last century, who had for a long time a powerful influence upon the affairs of Europe.† She roused the Spanish nation, against its will, from the lethargy and imbecility into which it had sunk. She encouraged agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; created a formidable naval and military force; kept the south of Europe for thirty years in continual

* *Mem. de Richelieu*, VI. p. 360. † *Ibid*, IX. p. 497-9.

commotion; caused torrents of blood to flow in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands, and at length accomplished her object, which was to make a provision for her children, for whom she procured Sicily and Parma.

The ambitious and imperious queen, it is true, purchased her influence at a very dear rate. She never quitted her consort either by day or night, excepting the few moments when they were both dressing, or at confession, and for one hour besides in the week, during the public audience. The queen was almost always present at the private audiences given by Philip V. She generally placed herself at a window at some distance: but as it was well known that the king communicated to his consort whatever was said to him, those who were admitted to an audience requested the queen to condescend to approach nearer, or purposely spoke so loud that she could not fail to hear what passed. The hour of the public audiences was the only time which the queen had to see her friends. These interviews she was obliged to keep a profound secret, because the king took as much notice and was as jealous of the persons who conversed with his wife, as

the queen of those who approached her husband.* When the queen was rather longer than usual at confession the king entered her apartment, and called away his wife, fearful lest she might entertain herself with her confessor in some other way than with spiritual affairs only. "All that we know," says Duclos, "concerning the life of Madame de Maintenon, and the conduct of the queen of Spain, clearly demonstrates to what continual torment those women are exposed who are resolved to govern subjugated kings. If we remove the veil from the private life of favourites we cannot forbear feeling compassion for their so much envied condition."†

All the travellers who visited Italy during the first half of the past century remarked, that since its commencement great changes had taken place, not only in the dress of the higher classes, but also in their way of living.‡ What

* *Duclos*, II. p. 196, &c.

† *Duclos*, II. p. 196. "Ce qu'on sait de la vie de Madame de Maintenon, et ce qu'on voit ici de la conduite de la reine d'Espagne, prouve assez quel est le tourment de ces femmes qui veulent gouverner les rois les plus subjugués. Si l'on devoile la vie interieure des favorites, on aura pitié d'un etat si envié."

‡ *Addison's Remarks*, p. 43, 46. *Keyssler's Travels*, II. p. 1093.

gave them the greatest surprize was, that the Italians should imitate the manners and fashions of a people whom they hated more than any other in Europe, and from whom they differed most in sentiments and disposition. Upon the whole, the Italians imitated the French the more closely, the nearer they were to France, the more frequently they visited that country, or were themselves visited by French travellers and armies.*

The courts of Turin and Milan were consequently those that first and most nearly resembled the court of France. During the whole first half of the last century, the court of Turin had the reputation of being one of the first schools of politeness and politics not only in Italy, but in all Europe; † and it was in some measure acknowledged, that the Sardinian ambassadors every where distinguished themselves from all others by their superiority in both those respects. Young men of rank, who were destined to figure in the great world, were more

* *Addison*, as above. "It is observed that the Italians have many of them, for these late years, given very far into the modes and freedoms of the French, which prevail more or less in the courts of Italy, as they lie at a smaller or greater distance from France."

† *Chesterfield's Letters*, I. p. 402.

frequently sent from all the countries of Europe to the Academy at Turin than to any other school. In the latter years of king Victor Amadeus the court of Turin was solitary and gloomy, rather than animated and agreeable.* The jealous king was displeased if his servants and courtiers formed an intimacy with foreign ambassadors and other strangers. So much the more free and uncontrouled were the ladies of Turin. They laughed and conversed with the men, foreigners as well as natives, with such freedom that, in the opinion of the rigid Keyssler, their conduct in any other place would have given occasion for great scandal.† Each lady had not only a professed lover, but also an agent or intermediate person to negociate their love affairs. The countess de Verue, and at a subsequent period the countess de St. Sabastien acted the same parts at Turin, as the mistresses at Versailles. Victor Amadeus resigned his crown, that he might marry the countess de St. Sabastien. After he had gratified this caprice the ambitious woman importuned her husband, till he formed dangerous plots against his son,

* *Keyssler's Travels*, I. p. 191, 249. † *Ibid*, I. p. 240.

the reigning and rightful sovereign, and endeavoured to dethrone him. Self-preservation obliged Charles to put his father in confinement, to shut him up in a secure place, and to separate him from the perfidious countess, by whose instigation he had acted.*

At Milan also the alternate presence of Spanish, French, and German armies, and of other foreigners had produced such a revolution in the genius of the inhabitants towards the conclusion of the third decennium of the last century that they allowed their women as great liberties as the fair sex enjoyed in France.† Ladies of the highest rank gave and went to masquerades and balls in the house of a certain *traiteur*, who had formed such an establishment as to enable him to entertain the most numerous and the most respectable companies in a manner suitable to their condition. Husbands had no objection to suffer five or six ladies to go on a party of pleasure to Alessandria, accompanied by as many gentlemen; to take with them silver plate, costly wines, and other necessaries and conveniencies,

* *Keyssler's Travels*, I. p. 179, 190. *Mem. de Pöllnitz*, II. p. 442, &c.

† *Keyssler*, I. p. 262.

and to bear all the expences of their attendants and their servants during the excursion. It was not ladies of quality alone that had shaken off the former restraints. Women were seen, as at Paris, behind the counter of almost every shop. Milliners and sempstresses also worked in public shops, in which large companies very often assembled. The nuns received visitors in their parlour like other females; they laughed, they jested, they diverted themselves with music like the ladies of the court, and had assemblies as frequently as these.

In no other city of Italy were the nuns under so little discipline and restraint as at Venice; especially in those convents which were destined for the reception of the daughters of the *nobili*. Nuns of noble birth not only received their friends and acquaintances in the parlour, but paid visits out of their convents, and kept their lovers almost in public.* Neither was any scandal given by the *nobili*, who kept singers or courtezans as mistresses, and appeared with them in the places of public resort.† It was customary to salute courtezans in the same manner as

* *Addison*, p. 95. † *Pöllnitz*, II. p. 180, 181.

women of character; and celebrated prostitutes walked with the same assurance, arm in arm, with their noble gallants, as did the wives of the highest officers of the state beside the gentlemen by whom they were attended. In 1729 and 1730, when Keyssler and Pöllnitz were in Italy, the ladies of Venice received morning visits from their admirers and friends of the other sex; though formerly such a proceeding would have been deemed an offence which nothing less than blood could expiate.* Ladies went either in the company of female friends, or attended by a single valet, to the public walks and pic-nics, to the theatre, and to visit their acquaintances. Strangers found a difficulty only in gaining admittance to family-balls, except they had acquired general confidence by long and invariable propriety of conduct. In the public promenades, at the theatre, and at balls the ladies never appeared otherwise than masked; and this continual disguise embarrassed the operations of jealousy in the same

* *Keyssler*, II. p. 1083. *Pöllnitz*, II. p. 162. "Les usages ont changé ici en bien des choses. C'etoit autrefois un crime que de voir une femme en particulier, et un etranger n'osoit trop s'y avanturer."

proportion as it facilitated the plans of the ladies, if they ever had any private wishes to gratify.*

At Bologna women of quality dressed in the French fashion, and enjoyed greater liberty than in any other city of Italy.† All travellers praised Bologna as a place where the distinguished politeness of the nobility of both sexes concurred with the rarest treasures of nature and art, to render a residence highly agreeable to every foreigner of taste.‡

At Rome it was by no means difficult, about the middle of the last century, to obtain admission into mixed companies, composed of people of rank.§ Married ladies of quality were subject to as little restraint in that city as elsewhere; and on account of this uncontroled liberty of the sex at Rome, M. von Pöllnitz, was of opinion that the Italians had been unjustly accused of jealousy.‖ Young

* Jealousy might have been deceived, but it was not extinguished. Both men and women still kept a dagger, as it were, in their grasp. Baron von Pöllnitz saw two jealous females attack each other with knives, and with such fury that one of the combatants was killed on the spot. II. p. 182.

† *Keyssler*, I. p. 944.

‡ *Ibid.* and *Pöllnitz*, II. p. 186.

§ *Keyssler*, I. p. 455. *Pollnitz*, II. p. 301, &c.

‖ *Pöllnitz* II. p. 316. "On accuse les Italiens en general d'être jaloux: je crois qu'on leur fait tort. Il n'y a

ladies of rank were invisible at Rome, as in the other cities of Italy. They were kept continually shut up in convents till they were either married or were past the age of love. Notwithstanding the liberty enjoyed by the females of Rome, neither the balls, the assemblies, the theatre, the concerts, nor any other amusements, afforded strangers as much pleasure as in other great cities. At the balls given by the nobility in the Barbarini palace, all the ladies appeared in masks. The men were also allowed to wear masks, if they only made themselves known on entering. The saloons for dancing were small and badly lighted. In the apartment where the persons of the highest rank danced, an oval space was inclosed for that purpose with balustrades. The entrance to this enclosure was guarded by the master of the ceremonies, who assigned a partner to every gentleman, and took care that none of the ladies should be displeased. Those who partook of these *feasts,* as

point de pays, où les dames ayent plus de liberté qu'ici. Il se peut que parmi les bourgeois il reste encore quelque levain de l'ancienne jalousie, mais ce qui regarde les personnes de qualité, ils ne me paroissent pas plus sujets à ce defaut qu'on l'est chez nous."

they were denominated, were treated with nothing but ices.*

M. von Pöllnitz found as little amusement in the great and little assemblies at Rome, as in the balls. At the great *conversazioni*, which, at that time were held only in three houses, the ladies first assembled in a semi-circle, and then distributed themselves among the card-tables. During the semi-circle the ladies conversed with some abbés, who stood behind their chairs. The women of Rome took no notice of foreigners, and when they were addressed by travellers who understood Italian in the French language, they answered in their mother tongue even though they were perfectly conversant with French. They played none but dull games, peculiar to the country which it was impossible to learn in a short time. The private assemblies frequently consisted only of the lady of the house and a dozen abbés, or persons who, from motives of economy, wore the dress of abbés. If even companies were more numerous, still they were not more entertaining. The most magnificent saloons were lighted by no

* *Pöllnitz*, p. 301.

more than two wax candles; and a visitor would, therefore, have had considerable difficulty to find the master and mistress of the house, had he not previously known where to look for them. Every person, on entering, took the chair which chance allotted. In general each conversed only in a whisper with his neighbour; and if any one now and then spoke in a higher tone, the conversation related to subjects which could not be interesting to any but a Roman; for instance, what the pope had said; what effect certain medicines had produced on this or the other sick cardinal; the state of the weather; or the quarter in which the moon happened to be. The theatre did not compensate travellers for the *ennui* of these assemblies. Comedies and operas were not performed all the year round. The operas of Rome were surpassed by those of the other cities of Italy, for many reasons, but especially because the rule of the ancient Roman theatre, which suffered no females to appear upon the stage, was still retained. All the female parts were performed in the theatres of Rome by *castrati*.* There

* *Pöllnitz*, II. p. 302, 3.

was not a house in the whole city that kept a public table for foreigners of rank and merit, or where they were invited to dinner and supper.* Prostitutes were tolerated there, as in all the Italian cities, but they durst not mingle among women of character in the Corso.† The tone at Rome, and in the rest of Italy, was upon the whole, much more decorous than in France, though the morals of the people were not more pure. At Rome, where there was continually the greatest conflux of foreigners, it was immediately known whether a traveller had come from Paris; because all who had resided for any time in the capital of France might be infallibly discovered, by a certain freedom of speech and action which they had acquired in the intercourse with the Parisians of both sexes.‡

Among the great cities of Italy, Naples was as much distinguished for the prodigious number of its courtezans, as Genoa for the multitude of cicisbeos with which the married ladies were surrounded. The number of *Donne libere*, as they were denominated, at Naples,

* *Pöllnitz*, p. 363. † *Keyssler* I. p. 455.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 619.

was estimated at eighteen thousand. Whole streets were inhabited by these prostitutes, and even ecclesiastics were not ashamed to pay them visits and to reside in their midst.* At Genoa there were very few married women who had not one or more cicisbeos. In Keyssler's time a marchese de Spinola had introduced the innovation of stipulating in the marriage contract, that his wife should not keep any cicisbeo, and that he would not be the cicisbeo of any other lady.† The other Genoese adhered to the old practice, allowing their wives professed admirers, and themselves paying public court to other women besides their wives. Most of the Genoese ladies had several professed lovers. The more numerous they were, the greater was the reputation of the ladies for beauty and accomplishments. The mutual worshippers of the same divinity lived on the most friendly footing, and were as little jealous of each other as the husbands were of the cicisbeos. The more of these attendants a lady had, so much the easier was the service they had to perform, a particular duty being assigned

* *Keyssler*, II. p. 763.
† *Ibid.* I. p. 303. *Pöllnitz*, II. p. 431.

to each. One accompanied his lady when she went to church or to visit her friends. Another presided over the arrangements of the table. A third provided for walks and other recreations. A fourth had the superintendence over assemblies and card-parties. A fifth undertook the office of treasurer, attending to the receipts and the disbursements of his lady. Young and beautiful females had a greater number of cicisbeos, than such as were old and plain.* The aged, however, were not deserted by their cicisbeos; and even old men prided themselves in performing for ladies the duties of that character.

During the last century, Italy could not sustain a comparison with France, Britain, or Germany, either in respect to the study of the languages

* Lady M. W. Montagu observes that in former times the Genoese ladies had eight or ten cicisbeos, but that this period of plenty was over, and that, in 1718, when this celebated English woman visited Genoa, the fair of that city were content with one lover. She was of opinion that the practice of having cicisbeos had tended to polish the Genoese ladies. It was at that time asserted that the senate had introduced the custom for the purpose of extinguishing ancient family feuds, and to divert the attention of the young *nobili* who were unemployed. It is more probable that Genoa was the first city in Italy, properly so called, in which cicisbeism was practised, and whence it extended to the other large towns of that peninsula. *Letters*, III. p. 83—86.

and literature in general, or with regard to the inventions and master-pieces of science. Nevertheless Italy produced in the eighteenth, as in the two preceding centuries, the greatest number of females distinguished for their proficiency in the languages, or as connoisseurs and teachers of the most difficult sciences. Milan prided itself on three sisters equally eminent for their literary acquirements and their noble birth. The most celebrated was the countess Donna Clelia Grillo-Borromea, who could speak seven languages, among which was the Arabic, and was profoundly versed in divinity, philosophy, mathematics and history. The second sister, the princess Donna Theresia Grillo-Pamfili was admitted into the Academy of the Arcadians, on account of her admirable poetical as well as prose compositions. The third sister, Donna Genevra, wrote Latin with elegance, and was a perfect mistress of philosophy. Some years later Donna Maria Gaetana Agnesi acquired deserved reputation throughout all Europe by her *Instituzioni analitiche, ad uso della gioventu Italiana*, which were printed in 1749, in two quarto volumes. The example of these learned

Milanese ladies was emulated by Laura Cereta, of Brescia, Chiara Matraini, of Lucca, and more particularly by Laura Maria Catharina Bassi, of Bologna. The latter was presented in 1733 with a doctor's degree, and was elected a member of the academy which bears the name of the Institute of the Sciences.

About the same time a prodigy appeared not far from Leyden, in the person of Sarah Maria Renneman, the daughter of an Armenian minister. This girl, at the age of eleven years, played thorough bass, was perfectly conversant in mythology as well as in scripture history, spoke, exclusive of her mother tongue, the French, English, Spanish, and Dutch languages, and had likewise made a considerable proficiency in Latin. By the application which her father forced her to bestow on these studies he totally ruined her health. When any one took notice of the weakly condition of his child, he would reply: he did not care, for the life of man, at the best, scarcely lasted forty years. Upon the whole, the Dutch fair, excepting those of the Hague, seem to have imbibed as little of the partiality of their men of

letters for the study of the languages, and particularly those of antiquity, as they did of the manners and fashions of the French. Even at Amsterdam, in the societies as they were called, the ladies conversed so little with the men, and especially with foreigners, that the latter were absolutely deterred from approaching them. The pleasure of the assemblies of Amsterdam consisted in drinking tea, playing a game at ombre or quadrille, and then returning home.* The case was very different at the Hague. There the ladies dressed with elegance and taste, and endeavoured to please the other sex by something more than their beauty.† Every evening numerous companies of both sexes met at the house of some person of quality. There was no difference between a court-life at the Hague, and at other courts, except that personal advantages, and riches in particular were more highly respected than birth and rank. The Portuguese Jews, Texeyra, Schwarzo, and Dulisse were admitted with their wives into all companies, and in return

* *Pöllnitz*, III. p. 313. † *Ibid.* III. p. 333.

often entertained persons of the highest rank at their own houses.*

In the third, and still more in the fourth and fifth decennium of the last century, the nobility and principal merchants of England were more eager to adopt the French fashions, cookery, and way of living, than the inhabitants of any other country. This spirit of imitation was not excited by the example of the court, but by the frequent visits of persons of rank of both sexes to France, and more especially by the duke of Marlborough, lord Bolingbroke, and the earl of Chesterfield, who were admired both at home and abroad as patterns of elegant and polished manners. Just at the period when the French taste was most prevalent among the higher ranks, the court was more lonely and dull than it had ever been before. After the death of queen Caroline, George II. never kept a public table. The prince and princess of Wales never appeared at court. The duke of Cumberland and his sisters always ate alone, without admitting any spectators. The king and the royal fa-

* *Pöllnitz*, III. p. 361.

mily were never seen except at divine service, and at the grand court-days held twice or thrice a year. On such occasions the princesses sat down to cards at about eight o'clock, but no stranger was permitted to approach the tables within a certain distance. The only *fête* given at court during the whole year was on the king's birth-day, and even then no person was invited to table. If, however, the court was dull, the capital was so much the more lively. Both Baron von Pöllnitz, and M. von Bielefeld acknowledged that they preferred the amusements of London to the diversions of Paris and Rome. People of quality, and the rich, copied the French in their tables, dress, furniture, and equipages.*

About the middle of the eighteenth century the fine gentlemen in England wore scarlet embroidered or laced coats, brocade waistcoats, hats ornamented with white feathers and red-heeled shoes.† Lord Chesterfield regretted that these *beaux* were not more numerous. "Most

* *Pöllnitz*, III. p. 411. *Bielefeld*, II. p. 255, 265. "Ici le seigneur s'habille, se meuble, fait servir sa table, s'abreuve et arrange son equipage absolument à la Françoise. La table des gens de qualité est servie absolument à la Françoise."

† *Chesterfield's Letters*, 4to. I. p. 214. II. 183.

of our young fellows," says he, "display some character or other by their dress; some affect the tremendous, and wear a great and fiercely-cocked hat, an enormous sword, a short waistcoat, and a black cravat. Others go in brown frocks, leather breeches, great oaken cudgels in their hands, their hats uncocked, and their hair unpowdered." * The men, however, in general imitated the French fashions and manners much more than the women. During the first thirty years the latter were strangers to paint, and travellers had the pleasure of beholding the blushes of the fair females of England, rendered still more lovely by their bashfulness and modesty. The dress of the English women was rather rich than elegant, and in the opinion of travellers who were even prepossessed in their favour, it appeared as if they strove to disfigure themselves by their attire. They wore without exception strait-laced stays and close gowns, the sleeves of which reached no lower than the elbows, and made them appear as if they had neither shoulders nor breasts.† The hoops with which they were encom-

* *Chesterfield's Letters*, I. p. 383.
† *Pöllnitz*, III. p. 410, 411.

passed, being narrow above and immoderately wide below, were equally disadvantageous to their persons.* Their admirers were not desirous that they should borrow the red and white paints,† the cosmetics and coquetry of the French, but that they might imitate and adopt the many trivial but graceful contrivances by which the ladies of France endeavoured to set off their charms.

The ladies of England paid very little attention to female occupations. They spent their time in paying and receiving visits. They never missed going to court, to shew themselves, in which their principal pleasure seemed to consist. The same motive caused them to frequent the public walks, and to go to concerts

* "Une troussure assez plate et large, avec des juppes ou paniers fort etroits par le haut, et excessivement larges par le bas achevent de diminuer leurs graces. Elles sont toujours, lacées, et il est aussi rare de voir ici une femme sans corps qu'il est rare de voir à Paris une femme habillée."

† How disgusting the paints and the head-dresses of the French ladies appeared to those of England, is proved by the following passage from Lady M. W. Montagu, III. p. 118. —"A propos of countenances, I must tell you something of the French ladies, and such—(I can't help making use of the coarse word) nauseous creatures! so fantastically absurd in their dress! so monstrously unnatural in their paints! their hair cut short and curled round their faces, and so loaded with powder, that it makes it look like white wool, and on their cheeks to their chins unmercifully laid on a shining red japan, that glisters in a most flaming manner, so that they seem to have no resemblance to human faces."

and plays. In all these places they were extremely reserved They scarcely spoke to each other; and their fans constituted their only entertainment. Baron von Pöllnitz was once at a house in which a company of at least twenty ladies had assembled, and not one single man besides himself. These ladies looked at one another, but without speaking a word. Husbands in general were seldom of the parties of their wives, and gave themselves very little concern about the conduct of the latter. The English fair could go abroad when they pleased, and do just what they had a mind. In the morning they walked out into the park in a neat *negligée*, and a black velvet mask on their faces, or rode on horseback, or paid visits to their female friends or acquaintance.

Of all the great courts of Germany, the imperial court during the reign of Charles VI. relinquished the least of its ancient etiquette, and was least inclined to adopt the French manners and fashions.* The emperor commonly ate with

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 288, &c. *Montagu's Letters*, I. p. 66. Lady M. W. Montagu was at Vienna in 1716. The twelve maids of honor of the empress lived in confinement after the custom of Spain. *Ibid.* I. p. 45. Lovers chose their mistresses rather by their quality than their beauty; and the ladies

the empress, and the arch-duchesses; and both their majesties were always waited upon at table by the first officers of their court. The only difference between the common and the gala-tables of the imperial family was, that at the latter the dinner was attended with music. The ordinary pastime of the emperor consisted in shooting at a mark, hunting, and concerts, in which the monarch sometimes took a part himself, being a great connoisseur in music. Notwithstanding this fondness for music only two operas were given in a year, on the name-days of the emperor and empress, and these operas were sometimes repeated during the carnival.* At the same time great masquerades were given at court, in which country weddings were most commonly represented. The imperial palaces, pleasure houses, gardens, and furniture were so mean as to produce a disagreeable impression on all foreigners.† The court appeared in its greatest brilliancy on the name-days of the em-

were not less tenacious than the men of the prerogatives of birth and rank. A ludicrous instance of this disposition is mentioned in *Montagu's Letters*, I. p. 62.

* The German comedy was of the most wretched description. *Montagu's Letters*, I. p. 39.

† So much the greater was the splendor of the habitations of the principal nobility. *Montagu's Letters*. I. p. 30, 31.

peror and empress. On these occasions the emperor, who, in general, dressed very plain, was covered with diamonds; and as for the empress, her apparel was so rich, and so loaded with jewels, that she could scarcely stand under it. The emperor was more devout than gallant,* and had a greater partiality for religious festivals, than for those of the court. He obliged not only all the ladies and gentlemen of his court, but likewise the foreign ambassadors to attend all his exercises of devotion. No person was more inconsolable on account of this restraint than the gallant duke de Richelieu during his embassy at Vienna.† In a letter to cardinal Polignac, at Rome, he says: "I have led such a pious life here during Lent that I have scarcely had a quarter of an hour's leisure the whole day. Had I been acquainted with the way of living of ambassadors in this city, nothing on earth should have persuaded me to accept the embassy to Vienna, where the emperor, under the appearance of invitations and representations, makes all the foreign ambassadors

* He never spoke to any of the ladies of his court. *Montagu's Letters*, I. p. 44.

† He went to Vienna in 1725. *Mem. de Richelieu*, IV. p. 56, 57.

attend him like valets. Nobody but a capuchin with the most robust constitution can endure the life led here during Lent. To give your eminence a proof of this, I protest to you, that from Palm-sunday to the Wednesday after Easter, I have spent full one hundred hours at church with the emperor. The count du Luc, who passed nine out of the eighteen months of his residence here on a sick-bed, and as many more in a private character, without being presented, told us not a word concerning the treasure of good works which to my great detriment I have discovered at this place. In my opinion piety ought to be rather more spontaneous than it is here. The excessive restraint, which is to be found at no other court in the world but that of Vienna, is to me absolutely intolerable; and I cannot forbear testifying to your eminence my dissatisfaction on the subject."

The inhabitants of Vienna took part with great zeal in all the religious festivals, and multiplied those of the court, and of private families as much as possible. "Except on gala-days," says the baron von Pöllnitz,* the court

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 292.

dresses very plain. These days, it is true, are very frequent, and consequently plain clothes are not much worn; for if it be a holiday, or the birth-day of some minister, or if some lady of distinction sends for a surgeon to bleed her, it is enough to put the whole city in gala. These galas may be divided into three classes: the court gala, which is general both for the nobility and the citizens; the grand gala, which is kept in the city in honour of some minister; and the little gala, which is held when a lady is let blood. A husband makes a gala here for his wife, the wife for her husband, children for their parents, and brothers and sisters for one another.

"The women," continues the same writer, "are rather handsome than pleasing.* They are tall, well-shaped, and walk well; but when they curtsey, they do it in such an awkward manner, that you would think their backs in danger of breaking. In dress, they are rather gaudy than elegant.† Excepting two or

* Lady M. W. Montagu certainly wrongs the ladies of Vienna, when she declares them to be without exception ugly.

† The *fontanges*, or head-dresses of the ladies of Vienna were still more extravagant than their hoops.—*Montagu's Letters*, I. p. 41, 42.

three, none of them use rouge, and much less white paint; and patches are very little worn. In a word, they have nothing about them that denotes coquetry. They do not easily become familiar, and, notwithstanding their vanity, they are cold, like all our German women. They are not so fond of gallantry as of gaming, luxury, and magnificence.* They give themselves no more concern about their domestic affairs than if they were strangers in their own houses. They know no books but their prayer-books, are consequently very credulous, and regard exercises of devotion as the essentials of religion. This ignorance renders their conversation rather insipid, unless it be animated by love. They have at least as high a notion of Vienna, as the women of Paris have of that metropolis. All these little defects, however, are compensated by a certain greatness of soul and uncommon generosity: they are warm friends of those whose interests

* On this subject Lady M. W. Montagu differs exceedingly from M. von Pöllnitz. According to the account of the former, every lady of the court had a cicisbeo, or gallant, besides her husband.—*Letters*, I. p. 52—54. The cicisbeos were in general faithful to their ladies. In case of inconstancy, they were obliged to allow the deserted fair a pension, which was stipulated at the commencement of the connection.—*Ibid.* I. p. 53.

they once espouse." To this brief sketch of the character of the women of Vienna, I shall add a few particulars relative to their way of life. "The ladies of Vienna rise late. As soon as their eyes are open, they call for chocolate, and send to their husbands to enquire whom they have invited to dinner. If they dislike the company, they give notice to some of their female acquaintance, that they intend to dine with them. In the contrary case, they send invitations themselves to such as they please. Having taken their chocolate, they dress and go to mass; for those who are least devout must hear at least one mass a-day. During the ceremony, they read five or six prayers, kiss all the pictures of saints at the head of these prayers, and tell their beads with great devotion. After the mass, they commonly remain a quarter of an hour in the church, conversing with such friends as they may chance to meet there; after which they pay or receive visits. During these visits, they discuss all the news of the court and city, and are at the same time engaged in threading gold, in an elegant japanned box, which they hold upon their lap. After dinner, they drink coffee and play at quinze, till even-

ing, when they go to court. On leaving the court, they go to assemblies, where they divert themselves at piquet or quadrille. When they return home from the assemblies, they undress themselves before they go to supper, and then retire to bed, well pleased with the indolence in which they have passed the day.

"The women of the second class, such as the wives of assessors, referendaries, and agents of the court, display a luxury and profusion that are truly astonishing. Their houses are magnificently furnished, and their tables well served. Here you find the choicest dishes and the scarcest wines, of which they never offer you less than eight or ten different kinds. The more respectable citizens, and even the lower classes, imitate people of quality as far as they are able. No people are so extravagant and self-conceited as the inhabitants of Vienna."

The eldest sister of Charles VI. observed, in the quality of governess of the Netherlands, as rigid an etiquette as did the emperor and empress at Vienna. The archduchess Maria Elizabeth allowed none of the ladies of Brussels the privilege of being seated on a stool in her presence. The princesses, duchesses, and

other ladies of the Netherlands, were obliged to stand before the archduchess, like the nobility of Vienna in the presence of the emperor and empress. The archduchess permitted none, not even reigning princes of ancient houses, to eat at her table; and this occasioned the elector of Bavaria, when he passed through Brussels with his brothers, to observe, that it was singular enough, that he, who lay every night with an archduchess at Münich, could not have the pleasure of dining with an archduchess at Brussels.* For the rest, the archduchess Maria Elizabeth was a learned princess. Besides the knowledge of many sciences which she possessed, she was acquainted with several dead as well as living languages. When she came into the Netherlands, as she passed through Louvain, she returned an answer in Latin to the deputies of the university, who harangued her in that language.†

Maria Theresa first relaxed the rigid etiquette with which her forefathers had fettered themselves rather than their

* The duke of Lorraine was the only exception to this rule. With this prince, however, the governante dined only at a hunting-seat, and was attended as usual by her ladies.—*Pöllnitz*, III. p. 191.

† *Ibid.* p. 186.

courtiers. By her affability and condescension, she gained the hearts of her people, and inspired her warriors with that courage which saved the Austrian monarchy. She admitted high and low to her presence, listened to the complaints and petitions of her servants and subjects with sympathy and patience, and returned them such answers as a mother gives to her children. She honoured persons of merit of both sexes with invitations to her table, which had never been done before at the Austrian court.* It was at the court of her mother that Maria Antoinette acquired that fascinating ease with which she avoided, while dauphiness, the etiquette of the French court, and, immediately after her arrival in France, prepossessed the court and the capital in her favour. In vain did her lady of honour, the countess de Noailles, repeat, that the young princess sacrificed some portion of her dignity and of the prerogatives of her high station. The blithe dauphiness paid no attention to *Madame l'Etiquette*, the name she gave to her lady of honour. She would not

* *Vie privée de Louis XV.* II. p. 99. *Moore's View of Society and Manners in France*, II. p. 306, 335, 388.

suffer any *ecuyer* to attend her; went out alone, and whenever she pleased; took walks; invited brothers, sisters, and aunts to her table, or dined and supped with them. In a word, she renewed as much as possible, at Versailles, the cordial familiarity in which the members of the imperial house lived with each other at Vienna; for though on gala-days they were, in public, jealous of etiquette, yet in their private circles the utmost ease and harmony prevailed * Maria Theresa herself gave the court of Vienna more liberty, more animation, and more brilliancy than it had ever before exhibited. During her reign, another important revolution took place at her court. The French manners supplanted, or at least gained the ascendancy over the Spanish and Italian habits and languages, which had heretofore been predominant. The authors of this victory were Francis I. and count, afterwards prince Kaunitz, who effected the closest union between the courts of Austria and France.

It is certainly a remarkable character-

* *Vie privée de Louis XV.* IV. 190. "En un mot elle rappelloit autant qu'elle pouvoit la familiarité intime, avec laquelle vit dans son interieur la cour de Vienne, qui, tres jalouse du ceremonial en public, est pleine d'aisance et de bonhommie en dedans."

istic of the past century, that it produced a greater number of reigning females of talents, than of distinguished princes; that the most important events during that period were brought about by these princesses; and that for nearly three-fourths of it, one of the most powerful nations of our division of the globe was governed by females.* Among these, Maria Theresa and Catharine II. indisputably deserve the foremost rank, not only for the greatness of their minds, but also for the goodness of their hearts, and the ardent zeal with which they endeavoured to promote the welfare of their subjects. Neither of these sovereigns was without faults, any more than the greatest and the best of princes. If Catharine II. had fewer female virtues than Maria Theresa, she possessed, on the other hand, a more masculine mind and attainments, and conferred greater benefits on her em-

* *Mem. de Richelieu*, IX. p. 497. "Il y a eu, en effet, pendant le dix-huitième siècle, six femmes qui ont conduit les plus grandes affaires; Mad. de Maintenon, Mad. des Ursins, la reine d'Espagne, Mad. de Pompadour; Marie Therese, et Catharine II. . . . . Il n'y a pas même de lacune entre les regnes de ces princesses; quand une disparoit d'un coté de l'Europe, il s'en élève un autre. La destinée des Européens a donc eté telle, que les caprices des cinq ou six femmes pendant le siècle le plus éclairé des temps modernes, ont conduit tous nos événemens."

pire than the latter, by means of establishments and institutions of general utility. The memory of both these empresses is still sacred, and will long survive in the hearts of their subjects.

The court of Vienna itself differed less from that of France, than the Prussian court under king Frederic William. This monarch suppressed all the pomp and all the diversions in which his father had emulated the French court. The muses and graces fled from the orgies of this otherwise great king, to the residence of his still greater son, who kept a court more distinguished for elegance than splendour at Rheinsberg. Till the commencement of the fifth decennium of the last century, the drinking of toasts was a common practice at the court of Berlin, and at most of the other German courts. Drinking-matches were thought creditable; and though drunkenness was not deemed honourable, yet it incurred no disgrace. Moderate intoxication was not taken amiss even in ladies. The wildest orgies were held in the presence of ladies; and the partakers of them were not ashamed to reel from the bottle into the society of females. This public practice of drinking toasts, and this habit

of intoxication, were wholly inconsistent with the manners of the French. The duke of Orleans, and Louis XV. it is true, got intoxicated as often, and to as immoderate a degree as the German princes and courtiers; but only in the celebration of private festivals in honour of Bacchus, which were inaccessible to all but their most intimate confidants.

The first time that baron von Bielfeld visited Potsdam, in 1739, he was asked to dinner by the colonel of the celebrated regiment of giants. The wine circulated briskly, and the empty bottles were drawn up in rank and file as trophies. When dinner was over, the then captain von Winterfeld invited him to coffee. After taking coffee, the officers and their guests began dancing without ladies, and while thus engaged champaign was brought in by way of refreshment. Before eight o'clock most of the party were not only unable to dance, but even to stand: those who had not yet lost the use of their legs, took it into their heads to go to the assembly of a countess, whose name is not mentioned. The ladies thought the baron one of the most sober of these reeling gentlemen.

One of his companions was so far gone as to slip between two chairs, and to be unable to rise from the floor without assistance.*

Not long afterwards, M. von Bielfeld partook of a Bacchanalian carousal, given by the then hereditary prince, at Rheinsberg, at which the princess, his consort, and her ladies were present. No sooner had supper commenced, than the prince began to give one toast after another, so that mirth and hilarity were speedily diffused through the company. These successive toasts operated so powerfully on some of the guests, that all their respect for the princess could not prevent their rising from the table and going into the antichamber to take fresh air. M. von Bielfeld, the historian of the revel, † followed their example. On his return to the company, he was seized with a dizziness, which prevented his distinguishing the taste of what he ate and drank. A decanter full of water stood before him. He began to mix the water with his wine that he might be able to hold out the longer. The princess caused the water to be poured out un-

* *Lettres de Bielfeld*, I. p. 67, 70. † *Ibid.* I. p. 84, &c.

perceived by the baron, and the decanter to be filled with Sillery wine, as clear as crystal. This water, as he supposed it, accelerated the baron's commencing intoxication, which the prince completed by making the latter take a chair by his side, and enticing him, amidst the most flattering conversation, to swallow one glass of Lunel after another. A lady was obliged by sudden indisposition to retire to another apartment: on her return she was received as a heroine with the highest compliments. Soon afterwards the princess dropped a glass either by accident or design. This example was imitated by all the rest of the company. In a moment, glasses, chandeliers, mirrors, and plates were dashed into a thousand pieces. In the midst of this scene of havoc, the hereditary prince kept his seat with the utmost composure; like the man of fortitude in Horace, who undismayed beholds

——————— the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

As the tumult gradually grew more violent, the prince and his consort quietly withdrew. The rest of the company were conducted home by their servants. Baron von Bielfeld had nobody to guide

his tottering steps; he reeled to the great stair-case, and tumbled from the top to the bottom, where he lay for some time deprived of sense.—Perhaps he would never have come to himself again, had he not been found by an old female domestic, who, at first, took him for the house-dog, and who procured him assistance. The baron received so much injury from the fall, that he was confined for a fortnight to his bed, but the rest of the company kept theirs no longer than the following day. Such *fêtes*, as M. von Bielfeld remarks, were not frequent at Rheinsberg, because the prince was a more assiduous votary of the Muses than of Bacchus.

Some years previous to this period, it was customary at the court of the elector Palatine, to conduct foreigners after their presentation, to see the celebrated tun of Heidelberg. Agreeably to this custom, baron von Pöllnitz was asked, soon after his arrival, whether he had seen this famous tun.* He replied, that he had not, on which the elector made a proposal to his daughter to go thither after dinner. The trumpets led the way, and the court followed with great ceremony.

* *Lettres de Bielfeld*, II. p. 16.

Having ascended the platform over the tun, the elector drank to the baron out of the *willkom*, a silver cup of large size; this he took off at one draught, and having caused it to be replenished, he sent it to M. von Pöllnitz by a page. The guest could not refuse the chalice, but requested the favour to be permitted to empty it at several draughts. The baron watched his opportunity, and unperceived, returned a great part of the wine into the tun, spilled some upon the ground, and drank the remainder. The first goblet was succeeded by several others, and M. von Pöllnitz was one of the first who perceived they should soon be overpowered. He, therefore, stole from the platform, and was making the best of his way towards the door of the vault containing the tun, but the sentinels peremptorily refused to let him pass. After this ineffectual attempt to escape, he crept under the tun, and there endeavoured to conceal himself with some boards. He was soon missed. The elector ordered the fugitive to be sought, and to be brought up to him dead or alive. M. von Pöllnitz was discovered by a young page, and carried like a culprit before the elector. The baron took the

liberty of challenging his illustrious judge as being himself a party in the cause: on which he commissioned his daughter and her ladies, to try and pass sentence on the offender. They unanimously condemned him to drink as long as he could swallow. The elector, as sovereign, mitigated the sentence, and directed that the deserter should the same day take four pint glasses, and that for a fortnight together, he should drink a like glass to his health after dinner. The first part of this merciful sentence was immediately executed. M. von Pöllnitz, though he did not lose his life, was for some hours deprived of speech and reason. He afterwards heard that his accusers had fared no better than himself, and that they had gone away from the tun in a very different manner from that in which they went to it.

In the first thirty years of the century there were several German courts, in which the drinking of toasts had become unfashionable, and to this number belonged, among others, the court of Wirtemberg. At such courts, however, it was still necessary to have great drinkers, in order to pledge strangers of distinction, who were known to look upon it as

an honour; as for instance, the privy councillor of Würzburg, with whom Keyssler met at the court of Stuttgard. He drank every day ten bottles of Burgundy, without being in the least affected. The most experienced veterans entered the lists against this hero, but found themselves no match for him. He appeared, on the contrary, to be quite invulnerable.* It was nevertheless asserted, that this invincible votary of Bacchus was equalled by five other persons, all of whom were at least ten-bottle men.

At the ecclesiastical courts, the practice of drinking toasts was retained to a later period than at the secular courts, because at the former there were either no ladies or but very few. Accordingly baron von Pöllnitz found the greatest drinkers at Fulda and Würzburg. In both those cities he never dined at the tables of the princes, or other persons of distinction, without being conveyed home in a state of insensibility. At Würzburg he found it impossible to escape intoxication twice a day, morning and evening. The only exception to this rule was, when he dined with the Scotch

* *Keyssler*, I. p. 84.

Benedictines, as they were denominated.* At the prince's table, the bishop drank two or three healths to him; the master of the horse, and the marshal of the court toasted the same number, and he was obliged to drink to each of the company, generally fourteen in number. All these healths nearly overwhelmed him before dinner was over. After the repast, when the prince had retired, the officers who did the honours of the court accomplished the rest. When he would not, or could not drink any more, the marshal of the court prevailed upon him, by the tenderest embraces, to take another glass to fraternal friendship.† About this period, the observations made about twenty years later by the earl of Chesterfield, were certainly applicable to the ecclesiastical courts of Mentz, Triers, &c. that they still retained a great deal of the Goth and Vandal, and that there no traces of French politenesss were to be found ‡

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 229.

† *Ibid.* "Il m'accoste d'un air riant et me dit: Allons mon cher baron, encore une petite verre d'amitié! Je conjure de me donner quartier; il m'embrasse, me baise et me dit: *Herr Bruder!* Le moyen de resister à de si tendres paroles."

‡ *Letters*, II. p. 213.

The same politician about the middle of the century characterized the court of Berlin as "the politest, the most shining, and the most useful court in Europe for a young fellow to be at."* The latter part of the compliment, the court of Frederic the Great always merited; but the epithets of the "politest" and "most shining" it deserved only at the commencement of his reign, and then only with considerable limitations. In the first years after his accession to the throne Frederic II. was infinitely more magnificent, and even gallant, than at any subsequent period. Thus for instance, in 1742 he celebrated the nuptials of his brother, the crown-prince of Prussia, with a pomp which attracted fourteen persons of princely rank, besides many other foreigners of distinction. The clothes worn by the king, his courtiers and generals, as well as those of the queen-dowager, the reigning queen, and the princes and princesses of the blood, were all made of the richest stuffs after the French fashion, and almost entirely covered with diamonds, lace, or costly embroidery. The magnificence of the

* *Letters*, II, p. 255.

apartments, tables, and diversions perfectly corresponded with this grandeur in dress. It is the more astonishing that the young king, who was solicitous to adopt the best French taste in every other respect, should have retained an ancient German ceremony which formed a singular contrast with the foreign elegance of his court.* Not long before his brother's marriage, the king recollected that it was customary, at the court of Brandenburg, as at other foreign courts, for one of the courtiers to present a newly married princess with a garland of straw, and to accompany the gift with a merry speech. The king appointed baron von Bielfeld to be the orator on this occasion. The presentation of the garland took place the day after the performance of the nuptial ceremony. Shortly before supper, the whole court formed a semicircle. A young gentleman brought the straw garland, curiously plaited, and adorned with little waxen images, upon a gold dish. Twelve other gentlemen went round the room with torches to seek what was presumed to have been lost the preceding night. When it ap-

+ *Lettres de Bielfeld*, II. p. 84, 85.

peared that it was not to be found, baron von Bielfeld began his harangue, which was full of the most pointed allusions, and was therefore received by the whole court with the loudest plaudits.* At the conclusion of this address the gentleman who brought the garland placed upon the head of the princess this symbol of the new state into which she had entered. She did not long wear the ornament, but soon gave it to her husband.

In the first half of the eighteenth century few princes of Germany were uninfected by the passion for imitating the kings of France in the splendour of their court and the government of their dominions. The minor princes, nay even the most insignificant, had their grand chamberlains, masters of the horse, grand huntsmen, and other officers; mistresses, guards, and a considerable military force; splendid tables, hunting establishments, and mews; finally, comedies, operas, and other amusements.† Exces-

* *Lettres*, II. p. 94, &c.

† *Pure verité*, p. 155. "Le plus petit souverain de l'Allemagne a sa cour montée sur le pié de celle d'un roi de France: il a son grand marechal, son grand chambellan, son grand ecuyer, son grand veneur, son grand echanson, &c." See, among others, what baron von Pöllnitz says concerning the court of Fulda, I. p. 219.

sive prodigality occasioned excessive oppression of their subjects and prodigious debts, by which the reigning families and their states were ruined for whole generations.

The most splendid and the most gallant courts of Germany, during the first thirty years of the past century, were those of Bavaria, Wirtemberg, and Saxony. The courts of Hanover, Cassel, and Manheim were, as lord Chesterfield observes, a little, but yet not sufficiently, unbarbarised to be classed among the polished courts.*

In 1729 and 1730, when baron von Pöllnitz visited the German and other European courts, he found that of Bavaria the most gallant and polished court in Germany.† The French comedy, balls, and cards were daily amusements.‡ Concerts were given thrice a week, and afterwards the company went to dancing

* *Letters*, II. p. 241. "The courts of Manheim and Bonn I take to be a little more unbarbarised than some others. Hanover, Brunswick, Cassel, &c. are of the mixed kind, *un peu decrottées, mais pas assez.*" The court of Brunswick, under the two last dukes, certainly did not belong to the *cours un peu decrottées.*

† *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 353. "La cour de Baviere est sans contredit la cour la plus galante et la plus polie de l'Allemagne."

‡ "Nous y avons actuellement comedie Françoise, bal et jeu, tous les jours."

and cards. The highest play took place when the elector and electress appeared at the public assemblies. Every person was obliged to pay a certain sum for admission to these assemblies, as well as for the cards, and these were the perquisites of the elector's valets, who were so wealthy as to be concerned in almost all the banks. Besides these tumultuous pleasures, others of a more tranquil kind were found in greater number in the societies at Münich than in any other city of Germany; but more generally among the foreigners who had entered into the service of the elector than among the Bavarians. Though there was no French comedy at Ratisbon, yet strangers were delighted with that city on account of the frequent entertainments, concerts, assemblies, and in particular on account of the high play in which ladies, as well as gentlemen engaged.*

Under Eberhard Louis, the court of Wirtemberg was one of the most numerous and brilliant in Germany.† Besides a grand marshal and a marshal of the court, the duke had a travelling mar-

* *Keyssler's Travels*, II. p. 1443, 4.

† *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 389. "La cour de Wirtemberg est une des plus nombreuses d'Allemagne."

shal, and all the other offices of the court were filled in a like proportion. In the stables, and in the court and hunting equipages, was displayed as much magnificence as in the ducal table. His highness kept a company of French comedians, to whose performances every person of quality had gratuitous admission. Balls, masquerades, and concerts, followed each other in rapid succession. The countess von Würben, the all-powerful mistress of the duke, gave assemblies every day, where, besides other games, the company played at Pharo. Scarcely ever did any German prince suffer himself to be persuaded by his mistress to treat his innocent wife with such indignity, as was duke Eberhard Louis, of Wirtemberg, by the countess von Würben. Though the subsequent proceedings against this favourite, after she had fallen into disgrace, were irregular, yet the vengeance which at length overtook this imperious woman was richly deserved.*

It is well known that duke Charles Alexander was for a time instigated rather by an unworthy favourite, than by concubines, to the most odious acts of oppression. Though none of his nume-

* *Pöllnitz*, 1. p. 397.

rous mistresses did as much mischief as the countess von Würben, still their multitude and the depravity of many of them hurt the character of the duke, and did irreparable injury to public morals.* In imitation of the French princes, a neighbouring sovereign formed a regular seraglio.† The duke of Wirtemberg was accused, even during his life-time, of far out-doing this German sultan. The expence occasioned by these concubines and their children was nothing in comparison of that incurred by the feasts, comedies, operas, and pantomimes which duke Charles gave and supported, and for which the most celebrated performers in France and Italy were engaged with a truly scandalous prodigality.‡

The court of Dresden would not have deserved any particular notice, either for extraordinary pomp or for the adoption of French manners, during the reign of the second king of Poland of the house of Saxony, had not count von Brühl been the prime minister and favourite at that court. No prince of Germany kept so many domestics as count von Brühl.§

* *La pure verité*, p. 113, &c. † *Ibid.* p. 110.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 142—147, &c.
§ *Leben und Charakter des Grafen von Brühl.* 1760. 2 vols. 8vo. p. 18, 148, 9.

Besides every description of persons requisite for a splendid establishment, as equerries, grooms, *maîtres d'hotel*, comptrollers of the kitchen and cellar, there were twelve *valets de chambre* and as many pages. The kitchen comprized four master cooks, twelve others, and the same number of assistants, so that the persons employed in that department alone amounted to thirty. Those belonging to the cellar and confectionary were almost as numerous. Though the count had no professed chamberlains, he kept many domestic officers of noble birth, who were expected to do the honours of his house, or to attend the countess, and who were better paid than the gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber. The same royal, or more than royal grandeur was displayed at the table, in the furniture, the equipages, the library, the cabinet of natural and artificial curiosities, in dress, and in the decorations of the palace of count von Brühl.* This excessive profusion was not even attended with the contingent advantage of affording employment to native artists, mechanics and

* *Leben und Charakter des Grafen von Brühl*, p. 18, 148, 149. *Meyer's Magazin für die Sächsische Geschichte*, the second volume of which contains the count's will.

tradespeople. Count von Brühl procured whatever he wanted to keep up his state, or gratify his vanity, even shoes and wigs, by many dozen or hundreds at a time, from Paris or other distant places. The unparalleled prodigality of the worthless favourite was productive of the most melancholy results for the reigning family and for the unhappy country. The debt of the state was increased fivefold. The ordinary expenditure was increased by more than two millions of dollars. Upwards of thirty millions were exacted from the people in extraordinary imposts, and these were not applied, as they had been taught to expect, to the payment of the public debt, but merely to the gratification of the rapacity of the favourite and his creatures. The Saxon exchequer became bankrupt. All monies there deposited were withheld, exchequer-bills were given in their stead, and thus was the property of widows and orphans confiscated.

As early as the reign of Frederic Augustus, the magnificent, the Saxons were regarded as the French of Germany, and the Saxons' ladies were thought to come up the nearest to those of France.*

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 174, &c.

It would, however, appear, that the females of Saxony copied the French in their attire and ornaments rather than in their sentiments and manners. When the former were in love, their passion was of the heroic cast; and this elevated sentiment they were taught by the romances of chivalry, which were their favourite amusement. They were not so much occupied with gallantry as to be prevented from attending to their domestic concerns, or to polite female employments.

At the beginning of the fourth decennium of the present century the French fashions had but few, and the French way of living scarcely any admirers in the great commercial cities of Germany. The sons of the rich merchants of Hamburgh travelled through all the countries of Europe, and in these tours, during which they frequently passed for Holstein noblemen, they acquired the manners of the great world.* At this period, however, the females of Hamburgh were almost as closely confined as the women of the east. They went scarcely any where but to church; or if they took a walk or a ride, they were always accompanied by their hus-

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 86.

bands. Strangers were seldom admitted into mixed companies; and whenever this did happen, the ladies were thrown into the greatest embarrassment.*

The patricians of Augsburg, Nürnberg, and Ulm, were almost utter strangers to conviviality and hospitality. In these imperial cities, both sexes rigidly adhered to the ancient fashions in dress; and the costume of the women appeared so singular that a stranger who saw them going to church would have taken it for a masquerade.† About the year 1730, the women of Nürnberg were confined, according to the custom of Italy, and much more strictly than the females of that country at the same period. Even natives of the other sex were not admitted into the female circles, unless they were near relations or intimate friends. The strongest recommendations could not procure a traveller an invitation to the house and table of a

* *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 86. "Lorsqu'il en paroit un ces pauvres femmes sont étonnées comme le pourroit être une sultane, qui verroit entrer un capucin dans le serrail." The spirit of the merchants of Hamburgh, at the beginning of the seven years' war, is charaeterised by baron von Bielfeld, II. p. 401, 402.

† *Pöllnitz*, I. p. 377. "Les bourgeois (à Ulm) et particuliérement les femmes, vont habillés comme à Augsbourg. Les voir aller et révénir de l'eglise, c'est voir une mascarade."

citizen of Nürnberg. The latter thought that he behaved handsomely, if he asked a person so recommended to a tavern, and did him the honour to get drunk in his company.*

On a perusal of the preceding particulars, my readers may justly exclaim: What a wonderful alteration has taken place in domestic and social life in Germany, in the space of half a century! It would be worth while, now, when it may still be done, for in a few years it would be too late, to enquire in the great and middling cities of Germany, when the meetings of the men, and the entertainment of strangers who were recommended to them, in taverns, wine-cellars, public-houses, as well as the rare and private family-entertainments, and family-circles ceased to be in fashion; and when on the contrary mixed societies, under the names of concerts, assemblies, pic-nics, clubs; the more convenient practice of having separate apartments for husbands, wives and children; the unobstructed visits of men to persons of the other sex; the more liberal education of females, their admission into large mixed societies,

* *Keyssler*, II. p. 1414.

their increasing consequence, and their improved modes of dress first commenced; when, finally, genuine hospitality to strangers, true conviviality among friends, games of hazard, taste and elegance in furniture and equipages, or the rage for fashion and extravagant luxuries, the custom of frequenting the baths, or making tours in the company of the female branches of the family, the rational and irrational fondness for reading, and amusement, were first introduced. For the greatest part of Germany, the seven years' war incontestably forms an important epoch in social and domestic life. The numerous garrisons of foreign troops, and the *ennui* of gay and young officers in winter-quarters produced a multitude of societies and social amusements which were afterwards continued, and have proved the fruitful parents of a still more numerous progeny.

CHAPTER II.

Of the State of the Female Sex in France, under the Reign of Louis XVI. and during the Time of the Republic.

We now come to a period, which though very remarkable in the History of the Female Sex, is infinitely more so in the History of the World. Under the immediate successor of Louis XV. the most ancient, and to all appearance the most firmly established throne in Europe was subverted. The most brilliant court on the face of the earth, that for ages had been the model, which those of all other civilized nations endeavoured to copy; the pattern after which the higher classes among every polished people formed their manners, suddenly dissolves

"And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
"Leaves not a rack behind."

A nation which had hitherto considered its inviolable attachment and loyalty

to its monarchs as one of its principal virtues, which had viewed even the vices and foibles of its rulers, and of those who enjoyed their favour with reverential awe, first incarcerates the best of sovereigns, the most amiable of kings, in a dungeon of misery, then drags him to the fatal scaffold, and both under circumstances, from the bare recital of which every feeling heart in the most distant countries recoils with horror. The same nation renounces the religion of its ancestors, for which it had fought for centuries; annihilates its ancient constitution, and with it the two higher orders of society, which it had been accustomed to consider as the strength or the flower of the community; abrogates its laws, its institutions for instruction and education; relinquishes its former way of thinking and modes of life, and even no small part of its peculiar characteristics; in taking the first steps towards promised freedom, is involved in the most ignominous slavery; endures and perpetrates the most atrocious crimes, and at the very time when it is bleeding under the axes of its tyrants, achieves the most brilliant victories, which excite not less admiration than the enormities

committed and tolerated, inspire detestation and contempt.

The French revolution is one of those phenomena, the causes of which no finite intellect can fully enumerate, and still less can it accurately appreciate the effects of each of these causes. Upon the whole we may assert, without fear of contradiction, that whatever has tended to establish the arbitrary power of the French monarchs, and encouraged the abuse of that power with its attendant vices, profusion, oppression, and financial embarrassments, must be reckoned among the concurrent causes of the French revolution.* Under the reign of Louis XIV. the arbitrary power of the king, his ministers and mistresses, the profusion and profligacy of the court, the oppression and misery of the people, had attained to such a height, that enlightened politicians even then predicted that his descendants would once accuse the despotic spirit of that sovereign, his

* The Abbé Barruel, in his *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, London, 1798, 4 vols. maintains very different opinions respecting the causes of the French revolution, from what have generally been adopted. My sentiments on this subject coincide with those which M. Brandes has expressed in his Review of the Abbé's work, in the *Gottingen Literary Intelligence*, Nos. 26, 27. 1799.

love of pomp and luxury, his profusion, and his thirst of conquest, as the causes of their ruin, and of the dissolution of the monarchy. During the period of the regency, the disorders of the court, and the distractions of the kingdom increased with a rapid progress. In the first twenty years of the reign of Louis XV. Cardinal Fleury retarded the fall of the tottering kingdom, by his frugality and solicitude for the preservation of peace. But after his death it advanced with accelerated velocity towards its dissolution. As early as the middle of the last century, that is about the middle of the reign of Louis XV. the earl of Chesterfield observed such a ferment in the minds of the people, and so many symptoms of an approaching revolution, that he considered the annihilation or diminution of the regal and papal authority as an event which must inevitably occur before the close of the century.* This

* *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, II. p. 232. ..... "these symptoms of reason and good sense, which seem to be breaking out all over France; but this I foresee, that before the end of this century, the trade of both king and priest will not be half so good a one as it has been. Duclos, in his Reflections, has observed, and very truly, *qu'il y a un germe de raison, qui commence à se developper en France:* a development that must prove fatal to regal and papal pretensions." A much stronger passage, which occurs in one of the earlier letters, I cannot now find.

prediction is the more remarkable, as most of those phenomena which developed themselves under the reign of Louis XV. and paved the way for the revolution, had not yet taken place. Voltaire, it is true, was already the most popular writer of his nation, but he had not then produced the greater part of those works in which he afterwards combated, and in a great measure annihilated, the authority of religion and of the clergy, especially the intolerance, bigotry, and spirit of persecution of the latter. The encyclopedists had scarcely formed their union,* and the economists did not associate themselves into a body till the year 1760.† They both in the sequel combined together, or at least considered each other as allies. They were also both termed the philosophers, though it was more particularly to the encyclopedists that this appellation was applied.‡ The encyclopedists and economists did not constitute merely literary associations,

* The first volume of the *Encyclopedie* appeared in the year 1751.

† See an excellent, succinct account of this important literary and political party, in the *Observateur Anglois*, I. p. 257.

‡ See the *Epitre aux calomniateurs de la philosophie*, in the third volume of the *Observateur Anglois*, p. 201.

but political parties, the one of which entered the lists with almost furious rancour against religion and priesthood, while the other combated with at least equal zeal, the whole system of finance pursued by the French ministers. These two factions indisputably produced a revolution in the sentiments of the well-informed portion of the public; perhaps less by their writings than by their influence in the splendid circles of the capital, where the heads of the encyclopedists and economists had already begun to take the lead during the reign of Louis XV.* Montesquieu and Rousseau belonged neither to the one nor to the other of these parties, and yet they both contributed,† as well as Helvetius, to the

* *Moore's View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*, 1. p. 27. "You can scarcely believe the influence which this body of men have in the gay and dissipated city of Paris. Their opinions not only determine the merit of works of taste and science, but they have considerable weight on the manners and sentiments of people of rank, and of the public in general, and consequently are not without effect on the measures of government. The same thing takes place, in some degree, in most of the countries of Europe; but, if I am not mistaken, more at Paris than any where else; because men of letters are here at once united to each other by the various academies, and diffused among private societies, by the manners and general taste of the nation."

* The first, by his *Esprit des Loix*: the second, by his *Emile*. The *Contrat Social* was scarcely read at all before the Revolution.

overthrow of the established religion and government. The systems of the philosophers, as they were termed, became the more popular, as the progressively increasing profligacy and despotism of the court and of the clergy, excited more and more contempt and detestation, and induced all the thinking part of the public to investigate both the causes of the intolerable abuses that were practised, and the means of correcting them. The power of the ministers had formerly been in some degree limited by certain maxims and formalities of the *bureaux*. But even these last remaining restraints were broken through by the successors of a D'Argenson and Machault.* The ministers were no longer taken from the body of magistrates, but selected from among the courtiers and military officers of rank. Every new minister formed his *bureau* according to his own pleasure, and new modelled his department in a manner equally arbitrary. The marshal de Belleisle, the duke de Choiseul and

* "Cet attachement aux formes établies sous Louis XIV. et aux maximes des ministres célèbres se soutint jusqu'à Mrs. d'Argenson et Machault."—*Du Gouvernement, des Mœurs, et des Conditions en France, avant la Revolution*, p. 141, 142.

their successors heaped innovation upon innovation. The measures of the administration became uncertain or contradictory, and the subjects discontented; more particularly the army, as they were obliged to be continually learning and forgetting.* The ministers who supplanted the duke de Choiseul, went much farther than he had done. The chancellor Maupeou suppressed the parliaments with a force that threw the whole body politic into convulsions; and the abbé Terray loaded the people, already sinking under its burdens, with new impositions, in order to satisfy the unbounded luxury of the sovereign, and the equally boundless profusion of madame du Barry. The *parc-au-cerf,* and the obnoxious influence of a woman taken from the common stews, rendered not only the monarch contemptible, but even

* " C'est à l'époque du ministère du maréchal de Belleisle, et à celui du duc de Choiseul, qu'on voit les ordonnances se multiplier, la discipline s'alterer, et le militaire se degouter d'un service, où il falloit sans cesse apprendre et oublier. Les manœuvres, les uniformes, les principes de la discipline, les punitions, les moyens d'avancement, les dénominations des emplois, tout changeoit à l'avénement de chaque ministre," &c.—*Du Gouvernement*, p. 141, 142.

" What most disgusted the army was the new regulation of the count de St. Germain, and the discipline, contradictory to the genius of the nation, which he attempted to introduce. *Observateur Anglois*, III. p. 155.

royalty itself detestable in the eyes of a great part of the nation, and these sentiments continued to prevail during the succeeding reign.

In fact, it seems almost incomprehensible how, considering the despicable conduct of Louis XV. and the odious government of his ministers, such a devoted attachment to the sovereign could continue to exist in the French people: as Moore observed among them even in the last years of the reign of that monarch, and as he has pourtrayed with equal truth and animation in the following characteristic sketches :— *

"*Roi* is a word which conveys to the minds of Frenchmen the ideas of benevolence, gratitude, and love, as well as those of power, grandeur, and happiness.

"They flock to Versailles every Sunday, behold him with unsated curiosity, and gaze on him with as much satisfaction the twentieth time as the first.

"They consider him as their friend, though he does not know their persons; as their protector, though their greatest

* *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*, I. p. 39.

danger is from an exempt or *lettre de cachet*; and as their benefactor, while they are oppressed with taxes.

"They magnify into importance his most indifferent actions; they palliate and excuse all his weaknesses; and they impute his errors and crimes to his ministers or other evil councillors, who (as they fondly assert) have, for some base purpose, imposed upon his judgment, and perverted the undeviating rectitude of his intentions.

"They repeat, with fond applause, every saying of his which seems to indicate the smallest approach to wit, or even bears the mark of ordinary sagacity.

"The most inconsiderable circumstance which relates to the monarch is of importance, whether he eat much or little at dinner; the coat he wears, the horse on which he rides, all afford matter of conversation in the various societies at Paris, and are the most agreeable subjects of epistolary correspondence with their friends in the provinces.

"If he happens to be a little indisposed, all Paris, all France, is alarmed, as if a real calamity was threatened: and to seem interested, and to converse on any

other subject till this has been discussed, would be considered as a proof of unpardonable indifference.

"At a review the troops perform their manœuvres unheeded by such of the spectators as are within sight of the king. They are all engrossed in the contemplation of the prince.—*Avez vous vu le roi?—Tenez—ah!—voila le roi—Le roi rit.--Apparemment il est content.--Je suis charmé,—ah! il toussé!—A-t-il toussé?—Oui, parbleu! et bien fort.—Je suis au desespoir.*

"At mass, it is the king, not the priest, who is the object of attention. The host is elevated; but the people's eyes remain fixed upon the face of their beloved monarch.

"All this regard seems real, and not affected from any motive of interest; at least it must be so with respect to the bulk of the people, who can have no hope of ever being known to their princes, far less of ever receiving any personal favour from them.

"The philosophical idea, that kings have been appointed for public conveniency; that they are accountable to their subjects for mal-administration, or for continued acts of injustice and op-

pression; is a doctrine very opposite to the general prejudices of this nation..... The French seem so delighted and dazzled with the lustre of monarchy, that they cannot bear the thoughts of any qualifying mixture, which might abate its violence, and render its ardour more benign. They chuse to give the splendid machine full play, though it often scorches and threatens to consume themselves and their effects.

"They consider the power of the king, from which their servitude proceeds, as if it were their own power. You will hardly believe it; but I am sure of the fact.—They are proud of it; they are proud that there is no check or limitation to his authority."

"No people existing or who ever did exist,* have had so just a claim to the gratitude and affections of their sovereign, as the French. They rejoice in his joy, are grieved at his grief, proud of his power, vain of his accomplishments, indulgent to his failings. They cheerfully yield their own conveniencies to his superfluities, and are at all times willing to sacrifice their lives for his glory.

* *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*, I. *p.* 55.

"A king, one would imagine, must be a perfect monster of selfishness and insensibility, who did not love such subjects, and who did not bestow some time and attention to promote their happiness. Yet the French nation has not had a monarch worthy of all this regard since the days of Henry IV. and of all their kings they used him the worst."

But, alas they treated the best of their kings still worse. The same author from whom I have made the above quotation, observes in his journal of his residence in France, during the latter part of the year 1792, that their deficiency in respect and gratitude towards a mild and equitable monarch, was still less honourable to the French nation than their former servile veneration for weak and vicious princes.*

When Louis XVI. succeeded to the crown, all France expected from the young monarch, whose principles had not yet been corrupted, a speedy correction

* "But as the men show an abject and slavish disposition, who affect attachment and veneration for a foolish or wicked prince, so those on the other hand betray a malevolent and odious character, who are deficient in respect and gratitude to a mild and equitable monarch, who, through the whole course of his reign, has manifested a love of justice, and an equal regard for the rights of his subjects and for his own prerogative."—*Journal during a Residence in France*, in 1792, II. p, 385.

of all the abuses under which she so long groaned, and a return of the golden age of Henry IV. Louis XVI. possessed more knowledge and capacity than the greater number of his predecessors, much more than princes require, in tranquil times, to govern their subjects with reputation.* His heart was one of the most noble that ever beat in a human bosom. It glowed with the warmest affection for his people, attachment to his religion, and love for his family.† Out of concern for the welfare of his people, he, from the beginning of his

* All his ministers gave him the testimony that, when in council, he, almost without exception, and more frequently than the most experienced statesmen, hit upon the right point to be considered. While his ministers were delivering their sentiments, he used to read, and yet he lost not a word of what was said.—*Bertrand*, II. p. 21. During his trial, his replies were so correct, that they could not have been more so, if he had been prepared for every question, and had time to deliberate upon every answer with the most able lawyers. His will itself affords an incontestible proof of a highly-cultivated mind.—*Ibid.* III. p. 284. See the account which even Madame Roland gives of Louis XVI. II. p. 6.

† "It was a remarkable feature in the king's character, which particularly shewed the turn of his mind, that his natural timidity, and the difficulty he found in expressing his ideas, never appeared when religion, the relief of the people, and the happiness of France, were the subjects of discussion. Upon these occasions, he always delivered himself with an energy and facility, which never failed to astonish the new ministers, who were prepossessed with the prevailing opinion of the king's narrow capacity."—*Bertrand*, II. p. 20.

reign, cheerfully sacrificed the splendour of his court, the indulgence of his own inclinations, and those of the persons connected with him.* From affection to his people, he did not hesitate to relinquish all the privileges which had till then been considered as the most sacred prerogatives of the crown, as soon as he perceived that these privileges were incompatible with the good of the nation.† Finally, out of love to his subjects, he would willingly have sacrificed his life not only to render them happy, but even to save them from the disgrace of pub-

* In the year 1775, the prince de Condé said, in his speech to the states of Burgundy: "Pourrions nous ne pas former les plus douces espérances, en voyant un roi de vingt ans, se retranchir des plaisirs dans un âge où il est pardonnable de les multiplier; ..... ni avoir d'autre passion, que l'amour du bien?" &c.—*Anecdotes du regne de Louis XVI.* I. p. 38. From the year 1780, the greatest retrenchments were made in the domestic establishment, not only of the king, but also of the queen.—*Ibid.* p. 133—135.

† See particularly the beautiful letter of the king to the National Assembly, in the year 1790.—*Anecdotes du regne de Louis XVI.* I. p. 140, especially p. 144 and 145; also his answer to one of his ministers, who represented to him the dangers which might arise from the convening of the states (*Ibid.* p. 168): "Qu'importe que mon autorité souffre, pourvu que mon peuple soit heureux;" and his affecting speech in the National Assembly, p. 211—213, of which I shall quote only the following words: "Vous qui pouvez influer par tant des moyens sur la confiance publique, éclairez sur ses véritables intérêts le peuple, qu'on égare, ce bon peuple, qui m'est si cher, et dont on m'assure que je suis aimé, quand on veut me consoler des mes peines."

licly murdering him under the shew of a legal trial and condemnation.* Louis XVI. retained his love for his people, even when the ruling part of the latter had proved that the object of their designs was to deprive him of his crown, and even of his life.† The benevolent heart of the monarch was never debased by any pernicous passion or vice, nor his understanding by any destructive prejudice. He had neither mistresses, nor

* "The sacrifice of his life seemed to cost him nothing: the honour of the nation was the sole object of his thoughts. The idea of being publicly murdered, in the name of the people, shocked him greatly. He wished rather to die by the hands of an assassin, that his murder might be considered as the crime of a few individuals, and not a national act."—*Bertrand*, II. p. 297.

† After he had been so disgracefully conducted back from Varennes, one of the principal officers of his household, in expressing his regret at the failure of the attempt to escape from the country, particularly insisted upon the additional weight which it would give to the influence and authority of the National Assembly. "So much the better," replied the king, "provided it only tend to the happiness of my people." *Bertrand*, III. p. 224. In his last hours, he said to his confessor: "This naturally well-disposed, but now misled people would never have accused me of tyranny, if they had known how dear their happiness has always been to me, and how earnestly I have wished to promote it. In proportion as I have been deprived of the means of attaining this object of my most fervent wishes, in the same proportion life has grown indifferent, nay even burdensome to me; and now I sacrifice it without the least hesitation. I am certain that the French will once regret my fate, and do justice to my memory, as soon as they become acquainted with the real progress of events, and recover the power of being just. But, alas! till then they will be very miserable."

favourites, nor ruling father-confessors.* His only foible was the chief hereditary failing of his family, that of too great weakness of volition, too little confidence of mind; hence he was easily disposed to distrust both himself and others, and a two-fold misfortune arose from this distrust, namely, indecision and procrastination in less important affairs, and inconsiderate precipitation in the most momentous concerns.† This imbecillity of

* "C'est, qu'enfin le roi actuel est peutêtre l'homme de son royaume, proportion gardée, qui dépense le moins pour son compte. C'est, qu'il n'a ni maîtresse, ni mauvaises qualités, ni préjugés apparens."—*Observ. Anglois*, IV. p. 100.

† See *Bertrand*, I. 32. 35. II. 20, 263, 298. Louis XVI. proves, like most of the princes of his house, and most of the French ministers in later times, the great difference which exists between the qualities which the French term *courage ou hardiesse d'esprit*, and *courage ou hardiesse de cœur*. The line of the Bourbons possessed the latter—intrepidity in death, and in personal danger—in an extraordinary degree. But in the former they were generally deficient, and Louis XVI. resembled the rest. On account of this weakness, Louis XVI. could form no resolute determination, and, least of all, any one that would have demanded energetic measures, or such as might have been productive of the effusion of blood. Count Maurepas has been accused of having designedly increased the natural timidity and indecision of the king.—*Ibid.* When Louis XVI. was still dauphin, the weakness of his grandfather struck him so powerfully, that, speaking concerning the surname that he himself should hereafter receive, he said, with great gravity, that it would be *Louis le severe*. This was so far from expressing the character which he afterwards exhibited, that he rather merited, according to Moore's opinion, the name of *Louis le trop-bon*. (*Journal*, II. 278.) Even though the count de Maurepas should have designedly inspired the king with distrust of

the king cost him his crown and his life.* But how could the unfortunate Louis XVI. help it, if nature had given him too much gentleness and too little firmness of character; if he met with such ministers only as encouraged his natural weakness, instead of assisting him to overcome it; if he was placed in times and under circumstances in which his very virtues were in some measure construed into vices and crimes, and those qualities were most indispensibly requisite, of which both nature and education had rendered him the most destitute? †

Among the ministers of Louis XVI. even those who, comparatively speaking, may be called good, accelerated the revolution, and the bad were its immediate causes. None of these ministers observed the changes which had taken place in the mode of thinking of the public, or at least did not pay that attention to them which they deserved. None of them observed the storm which was ga-

himself and others, prevented him from voting in council, and induced him constantly to follow the opinion of the majority of his ministers; yet this pliability presupposes an extreme weakness of volition in the king; and this, of all the latent weaknesses of a character, is one of the most incurable.

* Besides the writers already quoted, see *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 187.

† *Bertrand*, III. p. 283, 299.

thering, and which every moment assumed a more menacing aspect. Not one of them had genius or courage sufficient to dispel the tempest, or to avert its fury when it began, and to make it vent its rage in an innoxious or less fatal manner. Just at the beginning of the revolution the offices of state were filled with men of no ability, or at least of not sufficient energy to guide the vessel of the state through the storm which ensued.* But how indeed was it possible that at such a court as that of Louis XV. intelligent, resolute, and patriotic statesmen should have been formed? Men of science and literature were little regarded even at the court of Louis XIV.; and this want of regard increased under his successor, even to absolute contempt. Courtiers and men of the world became objects of ridicule if they obtained, or endeavoured to acquire distinction, as poets or writers of any description; and literary fame was an insurmountable obstacle to advancement to the higher posts in the state. The author of the *Esprit des Loix* could not even obtain an inferior office in the

* *Bertrand*, III. p. 367.

department of foreign affairs, which he had for some time solicited. Turgot had a genius for poetry; but he carefully concealed it, lest he might injure his credit as a minister.* This prejudice was the cause that in the latter years of the French monarchy, there were so few persons among the higher orders of society, and especially among the ministers, whose minds were stored with useful knowledge, and whose understandings were embellished by literary acquirements † Necker was the first minister who combated this prejudice with courage and success; and he would probably have annihilated it, had he not overthrown the French monarchy itself.‡

In none of his ministers did Louis

* See *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 181—184, 321, where several examples of this kind are mentioned. I shall only cite the following passage: "La publication d'un ouvrage, en procurant une gloire littéraire à un homme du monde, jettoit une sorte de ridicule sur lui parmi les gens de son ordre. La science et l' esprit étoient encore en quelque sorte roturiers; et en se rangeant parmi les ecrivains un homme d' un certain rang paroissoit descendre dans une classe inférieure. La qualité d' ecrivain étoit un obstacle presque insurmontable dans la carrière d' ambition. L'auteur de l' *Esprit des Loix* n' a pu obtenir une place médiocre dans les affaires etrangères, à laquelle il aspira quelque tems."

† *Ibid.* p. 183. "C'est par l'effet du préjugé, dont je viens de parler, qu'on compte un si petit nombre de gens célèbres par l' esprit, dans les premiers rangs de la société, et presque aucun parmi les ministres."

‡ *Ibid.* p. 181.

XVI. repose so much confidence as in the count de Maurepas. This confidence he merited merely by his disinterested character. He was in other respects too old, irresolute, inconstant, and inconsiderate to be able to govern a great empire with ability, or to restore vigour to one that was declining towards its dissolution.* The administration of the state was to him rather an amusement than an object of serious attention. He suffered the great machine to go at random, content if it only continued to move as long as he himself lived. He was a lover and patron of polite literature, and he indulged literary men and authors, with an almost unbounded licence. To his indifference it is to be attributed, that the encyclopedists and economists diffused both in conversation and by their writings, a number of ideas which undermined the religion of the people, and the constitution and administration of the kingdom; that literary men acquired an ascendancy in all polite societies; that the capital was in a manner subjugated the court, of which it had before been the most servile imitator; and that the mi-

* See *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 210.

nisters began to be more in awe of the popular men of letters, than these of the ministers.* The reign of Louis XVI. and the era of the revolution were periods of contradictions; on which account, it is, perhaps, scarcely worth the trouble to direct the reader's attention to a phenomenon, which, at any other time must have appeared not a little remarkable; namely, that during the very reign in which literature and authors had to endure the greatest ridicule from courtiers and men of the world, writers and literary men enjoyed the greatest influence in their societies and consultations.

Among the ministers that surrounded Louis XVI. in the beginning of his reign, there was none of whom the nation had formed such high expectations as of the virtuous Turgot. This minister had

* *Du Gouv.* p. 50. "La cour sous Louis XVI. n' avoit plus le même ascendant sur la ville, autrefois l' aveugle imitatrice du ton et des manierès de la cour. Les ministres au lieu d'en imposer à la capitale, avoient la plus grande déférence pour les opinions, qui regnoient dans les sociétés dominantes, arbitres suprêmes des réputations, et les gens-de-lettres avoient sur ces sociétés un ascendant marqué, pour la plupart des objets relatifs au gouvernement. L'indifference, et la légèrete du comte de Maurepas avoient laissé un libre cours à tous les systêmes et aux ecrits." After the death of Voltaire, D'Alembert was the leader, or rather the dictator, of the republic of letters in Paris. p. 175.

not only the intention, but also sufficient firmness, to apply a radical cure to abuses which had crept into the financial system, and at the same time to those of the administration in general. But the pressure of circumstances frustrated his most beneficent projects, and he was doomed to augment the confusion which he had hoped to redress. This excellent man wanted the talent, or art, of gaining, or managing, or yielding in points of no great consequence to men whose aid, or good opinion, was either necessary or important to the execution of his plans; and his firmness, therefore, often degenerated into repulsive or revolting austerity.* He was too strongly attached to the economists; and the close connection which he maintained with a sect that was dreaded and hated by many, would of itself have been sufficient to render the clergy, the court, and the financiers his enemies, to all of whom was to be added the parliament, whose hostility against him was of a more early date. Turgot did not, in the beginning of his administration avail himself sufficiently of the enthu-

* See *Observat. Anglois*, III. p. 243--9. *Du Gouvernement*, p. 221.

siasm with which the king and people were prepossessed in his favour. Instead of commencing with great and decisive measures, he at first made as it were only experiments upon a small scale, announced his important projects, especially that of the more equal distribution and more economical mode of levying the public taxes, by the suppression of the farmers-general, too long before they were ripe for execution; and thus gave time to those powerful bodies of men whose interest were likely to suffer by his plans, to concert a formidable opposition against them. Several projects, particularly that relating to the free exportation of grain and the free traffic with that commodity in the interior of the kingdom, he began too soon to carry into effect, before the requisite preparatory measures had been taken. Hence arose unforeseen difficulties, and mischievous consequences, which injured his credit, and rendered his good intentions suspected. At length he considered it incumbent upon him not only to abolish abuses and introduce useful innovations, but also to enlighten the public mind with regard to both. Thus his *ordonnances* became dissertations, which were rigorously criticised and

attacked in pamphlets written on the opposite side of the question. These controversies increased the hostility between the economists and their adversaries, and drew the attention of the public more and more to the affairs of administration. In the summer of 1776, a low cabal effected Turgot's downfal, which involved that of the virtuous Malesherbes, a man very ill fitted for a court or for public business. After the removal of Turgot, almost every measure which he had introduced was suppressed, and what he had suppressed was again introduced. The free trade in corn and the free exportation of grain ceased. The odious *corvées*, which had been abolished, were again exacted. The dismission of Turgot and Malesherbes, especially the former, excited as great regret in the nation at large, as it did exultation in the parliament, the clergy, the court and the officers of the financial department, and gave the first great and irrecoverable blow to the popularity of the young king. What, it was asked, is to be thought of a sovereign, who, after having been for years enthusiastically prepossessed in favour of a minister; having eagerly adopted all his

plans for the good of the nation; having set himself above all established forms in order to carry these plans into execution; having firmly rejected all representations against them from the most powerful bodies in the state; having adopted the most energetic measures; having held in one year two *lits de justice;* at once withdraws his support from the author of a new system of government, before that system is firmly established and its defects ascertained; nay, after all the evils necessarily attendant upon every great political operation have already been endured, and before any of the advantages which it may produce have been enjoyed?*

After the short interval of the administration of Clugni, Necker succeeded Turgot, as Vergennes stepped into the place of Maurepas. Vergennes contributed only indirectly,† Necker directly

* *Observateur Anglois*, III. p. 244.

† By the war with England. Turgot had warned against war with any nation, as the greatest misfortune that could befal the state. See a memoir of his in the *Politique de tous les Cabinets de l'Europe*, II. p. 419, 20. "Notre état néanmoins n'est pas tellement desesperé, que, s'il falloit absolument soutenir une guerre, on ne trouva des ressources—Mais au moins faut-il avouer, qu'on doit l'eviter, comme le plus grand des malheurs, puisqu' elle rendroit impossible, pour bien long-tems, et peut-être pour toujours, une réforme absolument necessaire à la prosperite de l'etat, et au soulagement des peuples."

and essentially to the event of the revolution.* It is remarkable that of the two ministers of Louis XVI. who possessed the greatest influence, the one, Maurepas, was governed by his wife,† and the other, Necker, was first raised by his wife.‡ Madame Necker kept a *bureau d'esprit*, which was attended, among others, by a poet and *bel esprit*, the marquis de Pesay, as he called himself §. This marquis de Pesay lived upon familiar terms with the count and countess de Maurepas, and through the medium

* *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 186. "Les causes veritables sont celles, sans lesquelles l'evènement n'auroit pas eu lieu, quelques circonstances, qui eussent eté rassemblées. Celles de la revolution se reduisent à trois en France, Les ecrits et la conduit de M. Necker, qui ont enflammé les esprits des gens du monde, et du peuple; la trop facile bonté du Roi, et l'Assemblée des Notables. Supprimez l'une de ces causes.... et il n'y a pas de revolution."

† Maurepas acknowledged this himself. The marquis de Poyanne once met, at the table of the count, a young officer, who seemed to belong to the family, and expressed his surprise that he was not acquainted with him. "Tantpis pour vous," said M. de. Maurepas, "car c'est l'homme le plus important, qu'il y ait en France. Il est l'amant de ma Cousine ***, qu'il gouverne: ma cousine gouverne ma femme, et je gouverne la France." *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 218, 9.

‡ See *Du Gouvernement*, p. 238, concerning the marquis de Pesay, and p. 255--9 respecting Necker; but particularly *Bertrand*, I. 245, &c.

§ "Madame Necker, espèce d'érudite....avoit fait de sa maison un bureau d'esprit. Elle y dissertoit pessamment.... elle avoit beaucoup d'addresse pour l'intrigue: elle savoit attirer à son mari des partisans par ses empressemens, ses louanges éxagérées, et de petits services rendus à propos."

of the former conveyed several of his projects into the hands of the king. He availed himself of the same channel to communicate to his majesty some of Necker's schemes, which service Necker very gratefully rewarded by assisting the poet, who was considerably in debt, with his purse. The king perused Necker's essays with the greatest avidity, and these, together with the recommendation of Maurepas, placed him conjointly with Taboureau, at the head of the finances, from which he soon contrived to exclude his troublesome associate. Necker for a time satisfied the high expectations which had been formed of him, by the loans with which he prosecuted the war against England, without imposing any new taxes upon the people. But while these new loans increased the national debt by many millions, the troops that returned from beyond the Atlantic disseminated in the French army the first seeds of the love of liberty. Still more prejudicial in their effects than the augmentation of the national debt were the writings of Necker, particularly his *Compte rendu*, and afterwards his larger work on the finances, as they added fuel to the flame which had already commenced in the

minds of the people; for every branch of the financial administration now began to be investigated with all the ardour of passion. Necker was the hero of the literary world, the favourite of the female sex. This popularity which he enjoyed with the fair sex seemed still more difficult to be accounted for than the extraordinary success which had attended his political career. Necker was a man of a very unprepossessing exterior and great austerity of manners; and yet ladies, the most distinguished by their rank, their beauty, their feminine delicacy, espoused his cause with an enthusiasm which made them forget their quality, their sex, nay even every idea of decorum.* The men of letters and the women overpowered the voices of the calm, discriminating observers, who remarked that Necker's art of government

* *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 269. "Cést une chose remarquable, que l'enthousiasme des femmes les plus distinguées par le rang, et la beauté, pour un homme d'une figure ignoble, et éloigné de la galanterie, par l' austerité apparente de ses moeurs." In the same place we find a remarkable instance of the enthusiasm with which the ladies were inspired by Necker. The duchess de Lauzun, one of the most gentle and timid of her sex, having overheard some unknown person inveighing against Necker in a public walk, felt herself so exasperated at the stranger, that she could not refrain from loading him with the most contumelious epithets in the presence of the whole company.

consisted only in borrowing money from all quarters and on any terms. The austere minister secretly flattered the ladies, who made all their admirers his advocates, and felt vain of the deference which was paid them, as they imagined, by the preserver of France.* When, therefore, Necker, by his imprudent arrogance, first incurred the displeasure of the sovereign, the men of letters, and still more the ladies, raised an outcry as if the salvation of the country was at stake. Cabals were formed against the government. The credit of the public securities was depreciated. First the assembly of the notables was convened, then that of the states-general. The disgrace of Necker strengthened his party instead of weakening it, and thus reinforced, it did not cease to cry up Necker as the only man capable of saving France, till the king found himself under the necessity of elevating this *Roi de la Canaille,* as Mirabeau called him, to the situation of first minister of finance. Necker now remained for a time in possession of uncontrouled power. This power, however, was not sufficient to

* *Du Gouvernement*, p. 268—270.

satisfy his vanity or his ambition. He wished to render himself independent of the favour of the court, and that by becoming not the minister of the king, but the minister of the nation. Necker might, without difficulty, have deferred the assembling of the states, which had been promised to the people, and thereby have allayed the ferment which existed in the minds of the whole nation. He did it not; but convened first the notables, then the states-general. He prevailed upon the king, even against the almost unanimous sentiment of the notables, to give the *Tiers Etat* a double representation, or to suffer them to have as many representatives as the two other orders of the state put together, in the firm persuasion that the *Tiers Etat* would, out of gratitude, perform for him whatever he wished, and suffer themselves to be guided by him as he might think proper.* He prevailed upon the king, in opposition to the opinion of all the other ministers, to assemble the states at Versailles, near to the capital, which was in the most violent ferment;

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 26, 118, 159.

and this measure has justly been considered as one of the causes that most powerfully contributed to the subversion of the monarchy.* After the states had assembled, Necker, under the ridiculous shew of integrity of principle, but in reality out of an overweening confidence in his own ability and merit, did not attempt to gain any influence with the members, which he might very easily have done; an offer having actually been made him to that effect by the deputies of Bretagne, who possessed great weight in the assembly.† Instead of causing the powers of the deputies to be examined in the name of the king and by his commissioners, as he ought to have done, he left this examination to the deputies themselves.‡ This imprudent measure occasioned for several weeks the most violent contentions and jealousies between the deputies of the different orders, irritated the representatives of the *Tiers Etat* more and more against the nobility and clergy, while at the same time it diminished the credit of the assembly and the

* *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 275. "Dans la multitude des causes qui ont concourir à la destruction de la monarchie, il n'en est point, qui ayent eu une plus directe, et plus fatale influence, que le choix de la ville de Versailles."

† *Bertrand*, I. p. 160. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 136.

expectations which the whole nation had formed of the salutary measures speedily to be adopted by their representatives.* Had Necker been solicitous, not to obtain credit and power for himself, but to promote the true interests of the king, he ought, in the name of the sovereign, to have agreed to the chief of the requisitions contained in the instructions of the deputies, and then to have availed himself of the endless dissensions between the different orders, as a pretext for dissolving the unnecessary assembly of the states.† But the vain man left them to act as they thought fit, until, on the 17th of June, 1789, the *Tiers Etat*, by its own authority, constituted itself a National Assembly. Yet, even then, what had been lost might have been regained, and the mischief which had been done retrieved, had not Necker's vanity, which was offended by some alterations that had been made in the declaration of the king or the plan of a new constitution, originally proposed by him, induced the minister to absent himself from the royal session, held June 23, 1789, in which was read the declaration to the states, which he him-

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 136. † *Ibid.*

self had drawn up.* This resolution of the minister soon became known to the public, who concluded from it that the man of the people disapproved of the measures of the court. The declaration of the king, which, if it had been delivered some months earlier, would have been received with the most rapturous gratitude, was rejected by the National Assembly in the most insolent manner; and this rejection but too plainly evinced that the royal authority was nearly annihilated. In the same proportion as that declined Necker's popularity increased. A report was spread that he was to be dismissed from the administration. In consequence of this rumour, when Necker waited upon his majesty on the evening of the 23d of June, an immense multitude of the people assembled in the courts of the palace, exclaiming, "*Vive M. Necker! Point de demission!*" Instead of withdrawing from the applauses of the clamorous crowd, Necker purposely presented himself to them, and suffered them, while they held him up in their arms, to exact a promise, that he would not resign his situation. His

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 165.

dismission, however, took place in a few weeks. After his recal, to which the king had been compelled, and his triumphant return to Paris, it would have been an easy matter for Necker to effect a reconciliation between the king and the people, and to induce the latter to accept the principal provisions contained in the declaration of the 23d of June; but the applauses of the Parisians had so turned his brain that he thought of nothing but how he might procure a continuation or repetition of these gratifications for his vanity.* During the greatest feast which this his ruling passion ever enjoyed, namely, on the day when he presented himself at the balcony of the *Hotel de Ville* to the people of Paris, he was accompanied by his wife and daughter, who alternately embraced him and kissed his hands, in order to render the scene still more affecting, and to come in for their share of the applauses which resounded from the admiring multitude. Scarcely had Necker arrived at Versailles when he found, to his great mortification, that his influence was by no means so all-powerful as he had, till

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 171.

then, fondly imagined. His late administration was subjected to a series of severe investigations, which at length induced him to withdraw from the country in a secret and disgraceful manner, and he was followed into his exile by the execrations or the scorn of those who shortly before had been his warmest admirers. The latest posterity will never mention the name of Necker unaccompanied with regret and indignation at the contemptible vanity of the man, and the melancholy consequences which it produced.

None of their adversaries did Necker's friends load with more invectives than the comptroller-general Calonne, who was one of Necker's successors, and who was himself superseded again by Necker. One of the slightest accusations which they brought against Calonne, who was a *bon-vivant,* profuse, and consequently a little embarrassed in his private concerns, was, that he was one of the gayest of the select circle that surrounded the queen, and were fortunate enough to contribute to her amusement; that, solicitous only to please the ladies of the court, he threw off that reserve which, as minister of the king, he ought to have maintained in his

deportment,* and particularly that he lived upon a very friendly footing with what were termed *les quatre coins de la reine;*† that, in order to satisfy the demands of the queen and her favourites, or the rapacity and profusion of the princes of the royal house, he exhausted the last resources of the nation, and rendered the dreadful deficiency in the public accounts still more formidable.‡ Perhaps these accusations were as much exaggerated as the reports were false that the queen had recommended him to the situation of comptroller, and that he embezzled part of the public money.§ Calonne summoned the notables under the idea that they would certainly agree to the utility and necessity of his plans

* *Anecdotes du regne de Louis XVI. Paris*, 1791. "Plus occupé du soin de plaire aux femmes de la cour, que de se montrer à leurs yeux avec toute la marque d'un ministre.... il avait à leur égard banni de ses audiences la sévère etiquette. Les dames y venoient en caraco, en pierrot, c'est à dire, en déshabille: la duchesse de Luines, entr'autres, y vint en jacquet, une petite badine à la main," &c.

† "M. de Calonne était très-bien avec les quatre coins de la reine: on appellait ainsi les quatre maisons de la cour, qui jouissaient plus particuliérement les faveurs de sa majeste, et avaient le plus de credit sur son esprit, les Polignac, les Vaudreuil, les Guiche, et les Périgord.—*Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ See *Bertrand*, I. p. 39. "Although the archbishop of Sens and M. Necker examined all the papers relating to his administration, yet they never could find the smallest proof of those heavy charges which have been urged against him,"

for the reform of the finances, and especially that of the equal distribution of the land-tax among all the proprietors of land. These plans were, in the opinion of a man of intelligence and integrity, so excellent, that though the notables peremptorily rejected them, they could not refute the arguments which were advanced in their favour, nor substitute any better in their place; so excellent, that even his enemies, the archbishop of Sens and M. Necker, found themselves under the necessity of blindly following the course which Calonne had marked out.* His greatest mistake was, that he admitted, or suffered the archbishop of Thoulouse, afterwards archbishop of Sens, to admit into the assembly of notables chiefly such persons as not only entertained unfavourable sentiments towards him and his measures, but even used every exertion to effect his ruin. The ambitious archbishop and the vindictive M. de Breteuil prevailed upon the queen to accelerate the fall of Calonne, a step which probably she often

* See *Bertrand*, I. p. 44. "It has since appeared, that the archbishop of Sens and M. Necker could do no better than slavishly follow the line which their antagonist had traced."

afterwards bitterly repented.* Calonne was obliged to quit the kingdom before the assembly of notables was dissolved.† No one could be worse qualified to supply the place of Calonne than the archbishop of Sens, afterwards cardinal de Brienne, who was nominated first minister. This profligate and inconsiderate man squandered the last remains of the royal treasure, totally annihilated the public credit, and destroyed all the springs of the regal authority, by carrying the abuse of *lettres de cachet* and *lits de justice* to the highest pitch.‡ The mad project of abolishing parliaments altogether, in order to be exempted from their opposition, occasioned the first movements of insurrection, for which the people throughout the greater part of the kingdom were already ripe. At the instance of Brienne, the king solemnly promised the nation to convoke the states-general.§ This did not protect the minister from the general clamour, which forced him from a post that he was incompetent to fill.

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 42.

† "It must be acknowledged, that this fatal determination, followed by the nomination of the archbishop of Sens to the ministry, was the immediate cause of the revolution." *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 46. § *Ibid.* I. p. 117.

Among all the ministers whom the king appointed, or was obliged to appoint to conduct the helm of government, from the time when the states first assembled, Bertrand de Molleville was the only one who, together with the requisite knowledge and capacity, possessed the firmness of mind which during that period was indispensably requisite. Montmorin was a man of integrity, but weak, and the count de Narbonne had still more self-sufficiency and arrogance, than even his friend Madame de Stael.* Roland, Claviere, and Servan treated the good king with such indignity, that even Dumouriez, Duranthon, and La Coste were shocked at it, and freed the monarch from these wretches.† Madame Roland, indeed, assigns a very different reason for the dismission of her husband;‡ but she also gives a picture of him, his friends, and associates, which widely differs from that in which Bertrand de Molleville has exposed them, in his memoirs, to eternal infamy.§ It

* *Bertrand*, I. p. 263. † *Ibid.* II. p. 266.

‡ *Appel.* I. p. 46.

§ It may be sufficient to advert only to the proofs of the corruption and criminal ambition of the heads of the Gironde, adduced by *Bertrand*, II. 164, 280. III. 25, 26.

afforded Madame Roland great pleasure when the ministers, and other friends of her husband, assembled in her apartment, or at her table, and consulted in her presence upon the affairs of the state.* But it gave her still higher gratification when she could transact business with her husband, and draw up memorials or write letters in his name.† These pleasures, however, and the report of the great influence which she possessed over her husband and his friends, ultimately cost her her life. This punishment could only be decreed her by the most obdurate tyrants. Madame Roland had not only a better understanding and more extensive knowledge than any of the wives or daughters of the ministers of Louis XVI. who enjoyed an influence over their husbands or fathers, but also much more resolution and strength of mind than most of the king's counsellors possessed.

But, my reader may ask, what have all these particulars and disquisitions relative to Louis XVI. and his ministers, to do with a History of the Female Sex? My answer is: They tend not only to

* *Appel.* I. p. 37. † *Ibid.* p. 12.

shew that under Louis XVI. the women still continued to govern the men who enjoyed the confidence of the monarch, but also that the unfortunate queen had not that share in producing the revolution which the public opinion, both in and out of France, is still inclined to attribute to her. It cannot be denied that Marie Antoinette had many great weaknesses, and was guilty of many great errors; but innumerable princesses both in ancient and in modern times, have been guilty of greater, have even perpetrated the most atrocious crimes, without having been hated and punished for them in an equal degree with her.* The daughter of Maria Theresa suffered more than any other princess ever did, more than ever a tragic

* I perfectly coincide with Moore, when he says, in his *Journal*, &c. II. 447—449: "The rancour which in this country is manifested against the queen is more violent and more unwarrantable than even that which appeared in Scotland against Mary, queen of Scots. ..... The crimes imputed to Mary, whether true or false, were of a much deeper dye than any which calumny has ever laid to the charge of the queen of France. Mary fell the victim of hypocrisy, female jealousy, and political fear: whereas the sufferings of the queen of France are as contrary to policy as to humanity, and proceed from a people, who, before they could behave to her in the barbarous manner they did, must have renounced every amiable quality imputed to them by their friends, and adopted the disposition of which they are accused by their bitterest enemies."

poet represented the heroine of his piece to have endured.* The queen forfeited, at the very beginning of her consort's reign, the affection which the people had till then borne towards her. This affection, as it cooled, was soon changed into contempt, and contempt was in time converted into inveterate hatred. This hatred against her still continues as rancorous as ever, though the obnoxious princess has atoned for her errors by unspeakable sufferings, which infinitely exceeded the measure of her guilt, and by her unparalleled fortitude in life and death, has excited the highest admiration, and an equal enthusiasm to imitate her example.†

It did the queen no small injury in the opinion of the public, that immediately

* "No; the annals of the unfortunate do not record, nor has the imagination of the tragic poet invented, any thing more dreadfully affecting than the misfortunes and sufferings of Marie Antoinette, queen of France; and for ages to come, her name will never be pronounced, unaccompanied with execrations against the unmanly and unrelenting wretches, who have treated her, and suffered her to be treated in the manner she has been."—*Ibid.* II. p. 321. It is to be observed that Moore wrote this before the king and queen were executed.

† As early as towards the end of the year 1775, satirical couplets were composed against her, and sung through all the streets of Paris. The Memoirs of Madame de la Motte met with no credit in Paris; but in the provinces, and in foreign countries, they proved very injurious to the reputation of the queen. In 1789 appeared the *Essai historique sur la Vie privée de Marie Antoinette, Reine de France;* and in the

after the accession of her husband to the throne, she used her utmost influence to have the duke de Choiseul, who had been the principal promoter of her marriage, placed again at the head of the administration;* and that, when her brother, the archduke Maximilian visited the French court she endeavoured to support the pretensions of the latter, which to the French princes appeared to be totally destitute of foundation, and therefore caused them to withdraw from the court, or at least never to appear there at the same time with the archduke on public occasions.† But still more detrimental to the reputation of the queen was her immoderate fondness for frequent change of attire, combined with a decided taste for studied simplicity in dress and ornaments, which, in the general opinion, was not only an infringement upon the established etiquette of the French court, but also unbecoming her high birth and rank. The queen

succeeding year, the pretended second part of this essay. The two parts contradict each other in their narratives, but agree in the audacity of their calumnious fabrications. Both parts are very ill-written, especially the second, in which it is even asserted that the queen had procured the counts de Maurepas and de Vergennes to be poisoned!

* *Observateur Anglois*, IV. p. 85.

† *Anecdotes*, &c. VI. p. 13, &c.

wore neither jewels nor any other shewy trinkets, and still less any tawdry and heavy stuffs. But she bestowed much time and pains on selecting delicate and tasteful patterns, and devising fashions in dress and ornaments calculated to produce a pleasing effect.* Her majesty was, not without some reason, charged with appearing more ambitious of being the queen of fashion, than the sovereign of one of the most powerful nations in the world; with considering the constant change of the fashions as one of her most important occupations,† and with employing in this momentous concern the assistance and advice of certain women with whom it was degrading to a queen of France to maintain any intercourse. The women alluded to, were the celebrated milliner, Mademoiselle Bertin, and Mademoiselle Guimard, an opera-dancer, and one of the most notorious courtezans in Paris. They were both admitted to a degree of familiarity with the queen, which could not fail to lower

* "On lui reproche un goût excèssif pour les frivolités, le luxe, la parure; goût dont elle n'a pas besoin pour se distinguer."—*Observateur Anglois*, IV. p. 85. Also, *Anecdotes*, I. p. 253, &c.

† It is asserted that the queen sometimes changed the fashions five times in the course of a single week.

her in the public opinion. Mademoiselle Bertin in particular was extremely vain of the access which she had to the queen, and the services which she imagined that she rendered her. She spoke publicly of the work which she had done for the queen, and the most fastidious customer was obliged to acquiesce, when she shewed her the patterns which she and the queen had decided to be the best.* The queen was actually the model that was copied by the whole class of *petites-maitresses*, as they were denominated. The expence which the perpetual changes of the fashions occasioned, was of little consequence to the queen; but the emulation in expence became to many thousands of families the cause of ruin and dishonour. Hence it was asserted, as early as the second year of the reign of Louis XVI. that the amiable queen, by her love of fashion, and by the rage for fashion which she excited throughout all France, had done more injury to the morals of the nation than Catherine de Medicis, or any queen

* "Mademoiselle Bertin impatientée, et voyant qu'elle avoit affaire à une petite-maitresse d'un goût très difficile, s'ecria dans sa mauvaise humeur: presentez donc a Madame des échantillons de mon dernier travail avec sa majesté. C'etait fermer la bouche à la critique."—*Anecdotes*, I. p. 254.

of France the most notorious for prodigality, vices, and crimes.* Marie Antoinette did not dress and decorate her person like a queen, but like a singer or dancer belonging to the opera. She had once her portrait painted in one of these fashionable dresses, and transmitted it to her mother, who had asked her for one. Maria Theresa sent back the portrait, accompanied with a letter in which she expressed herself as follows: "Instead of the queen of France whose likeness I hoped to admire in the picture you sent me, I have found the dress and ornaments of an opera-dancer. There must have been some mistake in this matter." † This maternal reproof was entirely lost upon the queen. She laughed with her associates at the ill-timed prudery of the aged empress, and at the want of taste which prevailed at the court of Vienna.

* "Cependant la reine a fait à la nation un mal considérable dont elle ne se doute pas; à raison de ce même devouement, du desir immodéré de la modeler sur elle et de lui plaire, la toilette des femmes est devenue un objet de dépense si prodigieuse, que la plupart des maris ne pouvant y satisfaire, beaucoup d'elles se sont fait des amans, afin d'y subvenir. Malgré l'exemple édifiant, que sa majesté donne d'union, et d'amour conjugal, elle a perdu les mœurs, autant que Medicis l'a fait dans son tems.—*Observateur Anglois*, IV. p. 86.

† *Ibid.* p. 87.

The queen's love of fashion was equalled by another still more dangerous passion which she indulged, namely, that for magnificent or tumultuous, and disreputable entertainments. No minister of state ever displayed more zeal in conducting the business of his department, than the queen did in the department of the opera at Paris. She daily teazed Malesherbes, to whom as chamberlain of the king's household, the general superintendence of the opera was committed, with one billet after another, in which she interested herself sometimes for one, sometimes for another, of the performers, or for some cabal or other among the numerous company of the opera. Malesherbes cared as little for the opera as he understood of it. He therefore complied with all the queen's wishes respecting it, and at last begged her to take the whole superintendence of its concerns into her own hands, which proposal she actually accepted.* Common sense was sufficient to point out to any one how degrading it was to the dignity of the queen, thus to interfere in the squabbles and cabals of a set of

* *Observateur Anglois*, III. p. 229.

people of no reputation or rank in society.* The disgraceful connections of the queen with actors and actresses were multiplied by her establishing a private theatre for the court. Here she selected the pieces that were to be performed, distributed the characters among her friends and courtiers, even acted parts herself, and to perfect herself in this accomplishment took instructions from actors by profession.† The appearance of the queen upon the stage would have highly offended the ideas of propriety which prevailed among the people, even if she had represented the most dignified characters with inimitable excellence. But she chose for herself the parts of *soubrettes*, and performed them so indifferently, that she was once hissed by the king, and declared by every spectator who was but a tolerable judge of theatrical performances, to be a bad actress.‡

Towards the close of the reign of Louis XV. some of the princes and nobles

† "On voudroit, que son ardeur extrême pour les spectacles et les fêtes, que tant d'autres femmes à sa place, ne l'engageat pas à se mêler trop dans ces details indignes de sa majesté, à avoir trop de bonté pour les histrions, a les admettre trop familièrement chez elle." *Observ. Anglois*, IV. 85.

‡ *Anecdotes*, &c. I. p. 284, 285. § *Ibid.*

of the court began to introduce English fashions, and amusements. This taste rapidly gained ground in the first year of Louis XVI.* The rage for every thing that was English spread like a contagion, and was actually designated by the term of *Anglomanie*.† Of all the follies comprehended under this denomination, that of horse-racing was carried to the greatest excess, and was particularly patronized by the Duke de Chartres, afterwards duke of Orleans, and the count d'Artois.‡ English race-horses were purchased at enormous prices, and still more enormous sums were staked upon their performances.§ The queen acquired a violent passion for fine horses, and horse-races, and condescended to caress the generous animals with her own august

* *Obsèrv. Anglois*, II. p. 122.

† "Les Francois, Milord, nous singent en tout." *Ibid.*

‡ "Les coutumes, les moeurs, les modes, et les plaisirs d'Angleterre les avaient seduits de telle maniere, qu'en peu de temps tout fut Anglais en ce Royaume; le Roi et le stupide Monsieur resterent seuls François." *Essai sur la vie de Marie Antoinette*, II. p. 12, 36. Also, *Vie du duc d'Orleans*, p. 29.

§ The writer of the life of the duke of Orleans, asserts that this prince won of the count d'Artois alone to the amount of eighty millions of livres, besides which he ruined the queen and many of the nobles of the court, by the sums he won of them on the turf, p. 29.

hands.* The ladies emulated the taste of the queen. A fine horse was an almost infallible passport to the favour of the ladies, and of the great, and this favour again might be irrecoverably lost by a person's expressing an indifferent opinion of a horse, which his distinguished patronesses or patrons honoured with their peculiar regard.†

The same princes and courtiers who instilled into the queen the unfeminine and unroyal passion for horses and horse-racing, seduced her also to engage in high play, and prohibited games of chance.‡ Faro was played in the queen's

* "La reine, qui dans l'age aimable où elle est, se plait à tout ce qui est mouvement et tumulte, a beaucoup contribué à encourager les courses. Pour amuser sa Majesté, il y en a eu durant le voyage de Fontainebleau: on avoit réservé pour ce tems une, la plus fameuse qu'on ait encore vue....mais la reine s'en a dedommagé par l'intérêt vif, qu'elle a paru prendre au maitre, et au coursier, qu'elle a daigné caresser de ses augustes mains." *Observ. Anglois*, IV. 312, 313.

† .... "que quiconque aurait osé trouver de defauts à l'excellent coureur, et à la haquenée favorite du comte d'Artois, il eût été sûr d'être envoyé par la Sartine à la Bastille comme criminel d'Etat." *Essai sur la vie de Marie Antoinette.* II. p. 12. Though this should not be altogether true, we may take it for granted, that the enemies of the prince and of the queen spread such reports even in the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI.

‡ "Depuis quelque tems les jeunes princes se sont livrés à la fureur des jeux de hazard. Pours'y mieux autoriser et se mettre à l'abri des reproches du monarque austere, ils sont parvenus à rendre en quelque sorte la reine complice de leur contravention aux réglemens, qui les devroient concerner comme tous les sujets; ils lui ont fait naître le gout de ce plaisir:

apartments. Both she and the count d'Artois lost very large sums, and many of the courtiers were entirely ruined. Public rumour exaggerated these losses, and they excited the greater indignation, as those who had been the losers did not pay their lawful debts. The duke of Orleans won more at play than even by horse-racing, as he had thoroughly studied all the arts practised by fraudulent gamesters.*

Several of the amusements of which the queen partook, were not in themselves of an immoral or reprehensible nature, but became so by their being indulged in at improper times, and under circumstances which rendered them liable to give offence. When, after Calonne had suddenly quitted the kingdom, the great deficiency which the minister had left in the public accounts was mentioned to the queen, she expressed her regret that she had not known sooner of it, as she would in that case have avoided many of the expences in which she had involved herself.† Notwithstanding this declaration,

on a donné le pharaon chez S. M. et il y a eu de grosses pertes." *Observ. Anglois.* IV. p. 300, 301.

* *Vie du duc d'Orleans*, p. 31. † *Anecdotes, &c.* p. 419.

she gave notice a few months afterwards that she intended to have a ball at Trianon three times every week. The first of these balls happened to fall upon the day on which a *Lit-de-justice* was held a Versailles, on account of the two taxes proposed by Calonne. The numerous enemies of the queen now began loudly to exclaim against her imprudence and extravagance. Calonne they said could not of himself have squandered a milliard of livres; he must have been under the necessity of supplying the inconsiderate profusion of the queen, in order to gain her confidence. For the same purpose, it was added, he had sent many millions to the emperor Joseph, the queen's brother, all under the name of a loan, but which would never be repaid.

The charge of extravagance the queen had already incurred at an earlier period by the purchase and embellishments of St. Cloud and Trianon. The indignation excited by the expences attendant on these pleasure-houses of the queen magnified the supposed profusion almost an hundred fold in the mouth of public rumour. St. Cloud and Trianon cost about eight, or at most, ten millions of livres, and from this sum ought to be

deducted the great value of these palaces, with all their appurtenances, even if no allowance were made for the embellishments bestowed upon them.* Not less unjust than this exaggeration of the expenditure of the queen, was the fabrication respecting the remittance of so many millions to the emperor.† Notwithstanding all this, the queen was guilty of a very censurable act of imprudence, in setting on foot expensive diversions and improvements at a period of universal distress, and of a general ferment in the minds of the people, even though they were attended with much less expence than those in which the mistresses of former kings had indulged themselves.‡

None of the things that I have hitherto mentioned, however, did so much injury to the reputation of the queen, as the nocturnal entertainments which she gave or partook of; especially her nightly visits to the theatres, gardens, and walks of Paris, Versailles, and other places of fashionable resort. It was believed, and even publicly asserted, that

* *Du Gouvernement, &c.* p. 65. † *Ibid.* p. 67.
‡ *Ibid.*

the object of these nocturnal rambles was no other than to conceal amorous intrigues in the shades of darkness. Different persons were named as the acknowledged paramours of the queen.* It was even reported that the daughter of Maria Theresa, impelled by insatiable appetite, admitted the embraces of persons known or unknown to her, in the groves of Paris and Versailles.† The king, it is true, heard nothing of these rumours, by which his own honour suffered as much as that of his consort; yet he was not less sensible than the people of Paris and Versailles, that these nightly rambles of the queen were glaringly improper. In August, 1779, Louis XVI. one day issued orders that after eleven o'clock at night, no carriage whatever should be admitted into the great court-yard of the palace at Versailles. The queen happened to return, in company with the count d'Artois, between the hours of one and two in the morning to the palace, and was not a little surprized to find her carriage stopped at the entrance of the court-yard. In vain she sent for the officer of the night and cap-

* *Vie de Marie Antoinette.* I. p. 39.
† *Ibid.* p. 49.

tain of the guard. They both declared that they durst not disobey the positive orders of the king, but were bound to deny admittance even to the consort and brother of their monarch. They were consequently under the necessity of taking a circuit in order to enter the palace by another avenue. In the explanation which took place the next morning between the king and the queen, he told her that he was accustomed to go early to bed, and having often been disturbed in his sleep by the noise of her equipage, he was determined no longer to put up with it. The rumour of the conjugal infidelity of the queen, deprived her both of the respect and affection of the people, and the king himself lost at least their respect. They could as little pardon the latter for remaining ignorant of the vicious conduct of his consort, as they could forgive the queen for being guilty of it.*

The last charge adduced against the queen, related to the suspicious familiarity in which she lived with several favourites of her own sex, and the influence which these favourites had upon the

* *Anecdotes*, I. p. 326.

queen, and through her upon her illustrious consort.

The queen was accused of being attached to these her female favourites with a criminal passion. The ladies whom the queen successively admitted to her closest intimacy, were very numerous.* But to none of them was her attachment so ardent, or of such long duration, as to the princess de Lamballe, and the duchess Jules de Polignac.† These ladies and their families were loaded with presents, pensions, posts, and honours. In vain might the distressed apply to the generosity of the king for relief; in vain persons of merit might

* See the *Essai sur la vie de Marie Antoinette*, I. p. 31—71. Among others Madame de la Borde had the good fortune to please the queen to such a degree, "que, non contente de se l'attacher comme lectrice, alle fit creer en sa faveur une charge de dame du lit, dont les fonctions sont d'ouvrir et de fermer les rideaux de sa majesté, et de coucher au pied de son lit, quand elle le juge à propos." *Anecdotes*, &c. I. p. 286. In fact it is as unaccountable how the queen could do so many things which necessarily must excite the greatest scandal, as it is incomprehensible how the king could fail to consider many of the things which she did with his knowledge, in the light in which every other sensible man must have considered them.

† The sister of the latter, in the *Memoires sur la vie, et le caractere de Madame la duchesse de Polignac*, London, 1798, has given a vindication and eulogium of the duchess, who died at Vienna. Persons who were well acquainted with the court of Marie Antoinette, have asserted that the duchess de Polignac was an amiable and benevolent woman, and that the countess Diane de Polignac was the leading person in her sister's party.

implore his justice and gratitude for a remuneration of their services; they every where found in their way the Lamballes, the Polignacs, the Vaudreuils, the Guiches, the Perigords, the Grammonts, the Noailles, who deprived them of the hopes of obtaining the object of their wishes, or at least required to be first gained over to their interests.* It is not going too far to assert, that those favoured families, who were comprehended under the appellation of the nobles of the court, consumed a very considerable part of the nine hundred millions, to which the *Ordonnances de Comptant* amounted within the short period of eight years of the reign of Louis XVI.†

* *Anecdotes*, V. p. 307. *Vie de Marie Antoinette*, I. 59, 60. When I quote the latter work, I do it not as imagining that every thing contained in it is to be depended upon as fact, but because it repeats what the enemies of the queen, or in other words the greater part of the public admitted as fact.

† See the translation of the *Red Book* in the Gottingen Historical Magazine, I. p. 171, 172, and *Anecdotes*, V. p. 444. The annual pensions also amounted to fifty-eight millions, *Anecdotes*, V. p. 417. The house of Noailles alone received 1,750,000 livres from the royal munificence, p. 419. The author of the work *Du Gouvernement*, &c. vindicates the queen with respect to the posts of honor and emolument which she procured for the princess de Lamballe and her husband, p. 65, 66. The post of *Sur-intendante de la Maison de la Reine*, would of itself not have excited such a rancorous malice against the princess, as at last occasioned her murder, although the king had previously intended either to keep it vacant, or to bestow it upon one of the princesses of the blood, as had formerly been customary, *Anecdotes*, I. 286.

All persons oppressed or debarred of their just claims, all friends to their country, who saw the magnitude of the abuses which were practised, and longed to see them corrected, were fired with just indignation when they heard that the female minions kept their *bureaux* and secretaries, that they held regular committees with their friends, for the purpose of consulting upon the affairs of the state; that these secret committees influence the will of the queen in all important concerns both public and private, and that the queen again guided her consort in all, or at least in far the greater number of cases.* The blind partiality with which the queen promoted her favourites and their families, and the manifest influence which she exercised over her husband, and which Louis suffered her to enjoy over him, likewise rendered the queen from day to day more detested, and the king in the same proportion more despised.

The queen at length grew weary of the continual bustle in which she had de-

* The king, whenever his ministers proposed any thing to him, respecting which he had not yet conferred with the queen, usually asked them, what does the queen say to it? In the book *Du Gouvernement*, &c. it is asserted that prior to the removal of the prince de Montbarry, the queen did not interfere in any public business.

lighted during the first four years of her reign. She relinquished the pleasures of dissipation for the more tranquil enjoyments of domestic life and friendship. One, or at most two days in the week excepted, the courts of the king, the queen, and the princes of the royal house, presented the appearance of so many private domestic circles, which often united in one family.* This change in the queen's sentiments, and the consequent alteration which took place in the French court, so far from regaining her the lost affections of the people, alienated them only still more, totally dissolved the connection which had till then subsisted between the court and the capital, and thus became a very important concurrent cause of the calamities in which the royal pair were at last involved. By the recluse life which the royal family led, and the disappearance of all dazzling splendor and magnificent amusements, the court of Versailles lost all the attractions, which had formerly drawn thither a concourse of the French nobility, and filled the gazing multitude with admiration and awe. Under Louis XIV. and even under

* *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p 48, 49.

Louis XV. the nobility both of France and of other countries, thronged with such eagerness to enjoy the splendor and amusements of the court, that a variety of regulations became necessary, in order to obviate the inconveniences that might have arisen from their prodigious numbers. Under Louis XVI. very few appeared at the court except those who were obliged, and even such as, from the posts which they held, were under the necessity of making their appearance on the one or two public days which occurred in the course of the week, considered it as a grievous burden.* The court was now no longer what it had been for at least a century past, the only or the principal seat and umpire of good taste, and of the prevailing mode of thinking, of polite manners and of elegant language; it was no longer even the seat of fashion, gallantry, and splendid amusements. The capital wrested from the court the dominion of taste, of public opinion, of manners, of

* "Elle (la cour) dévenoit un jour, où deux, plus nombreuse, et plus imposante, mais il étoit facile de voir, que la representation étoit une tâche penible, qu'on s'empressoit d'abréger..... La plupart de ceux, que leur naissance appelloit à la cour, se bornoient à s'y montrer une fois la semaine, pendant quelques heures, et s'empressoient de retourner à la ville, où ils briguoient les suffrages des sociétés, qui donnoient le ton."—*Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 52, 54.

language, and of fashion. The court bowed to the sceptre of the capital, which even under Louis XV. had still been the humble imitator of the court. Corruption of morals was almost the only prerogative which the court retained, and this corruption was no longer covered with that veil of politeness and gallantry, which formerly deprived it of much of its apparent grossness.* High birth, rank, and badges of honour lost much of the consideration in which they had formerly been held; and even the nobility aspired to places, not so much on account of the rank which they conferred, as for the sake of the pecuniary emoluments which they produced.†

The influence of wealth annihilated all external distinction of ranks, which were no more, as formerly, announced by progressive degrees of splendour in dress,

* Les courtisans étoient moins flatteurs, sans être plus vertueux," p. 53. "Il n'y avoit plus à la cour autant de politesse dans les manières, et les discours, depuis la fin du regne de Louis XV. sans qu'il y eut plus de franchise dans les ames; celle galanterie, qui naît d'une perpetuelle envie de plaire, n'existoit plus. Les femmes avoient des arrangemens, qui, par leur durée et le calme de la possession, étoient équivalents à des marriages; mais les avantures scandaleuses étoient rares."

† P. 53. "On considéroit moins dans les places, les distinctions honorifiques, que les avantages pecuniaires."

equipage, and retinue.* The greatest wealth, was in consequence of the derangement of the finances, accumulated in the hands of the farmers-general and bankers. Nevertheless, even in the last years of the monarchy, very considerable property was acquired by advocates, magistrates, artists, merchants, and tradesmen, also in many situations in the household of the king, the queen, and the princes, or in the *bureaux* of the ministers;† and with great riches it was easy to obtain not only the privileges of nobility, but also the highest titles, honors, and places. In the course of a single century, fifteen families of the order of commoners, had attained to the dignity of peers of France, a dignity to which some of the most ancient and celebrated houses, as those of Rieux, Baufremont, Taleyrand, and Chabanne, had not yet been elevated.‡

* "L'ancien faste, qui caracterisoit les grands, n'existoit plus. Les personnes les plus opulentes, avoient des habits simples et peu couteux. .... Le faste exterieur, qui servoient à differencier les classes, supprimé, qui restoit-il pour faire estimer un emploi, un rang, une decoration à l'égal des jouissances de la richesse? Dans les tems où chacun étoit attentif à conserver des distinctions de son état, la richesse n'avoit pas autant d'empire; elle ne pouvoit usurper certains attributs, les grands avoient des pages, des gentilshommes, des livrées éclatantes, et chaque condition avoit quelque chose de distinctif, envié des conditions inferieures."—*Du Gouv.*

† *Ibid.* &c. p. 92. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 97.

When persons who had acquired large fortunes did not think it worth their while to aspire to the privileges of nobility, or posts and titles of honour, they nevertheless enjoyed not only all the conveniences and luxuries of life which great wealth can procure, but also almost every distinction, which in other countries is bestowed only upon high birth and rank.

Commoners who had become the possessors of millions, were able to purchase the estates of the titled nobility. The principal nobles, most of whom were in reduced circumstances, thought themselves fortunate when they had access to the well furnished tables and the splendid entertainments of the farmers-general, and thus could occasionally find an opportunity of borrowing a sum of money of an opulent friend. Still more fortunate did the nobility consider themselves when they could marry their children with those of the wealthy commoners, and by such connexions prop their sinking consequence.* The talents and fame of artists and men of letters, did not lead to such high honours and consideration,

* *Du Gouvernement.*

as the possession of great wealth. But even artists and literary men of eminence obtained admission to the first circles, and their society was courted by persons of the highest distinction. * The thirst of pleasure had the same effect as the desire of wealth, and powerfully contributed to level more and more the distinction between the different ranks in society.† Both were produced by the despotism of the kings and their ministers; and thus despotism in this point of view also paved the way to republican equality.

Among the French princes, the very two who were of the party in opposition to the court, and wished to be considered as the friends of the people, were the most profligate and odious characters. The prince of Conti might vie with the greatest debauchee of the times of

* "Les talents, l'esprit, les agrémens, la célébrité dans les arts, faisoient obtenir des égards flatteurs. Et ces heureux dons de la nature mettoient des hommes sans naissance à portée de vivre dans une apparente égalité avec les plus grands seigneurs, les personnes les plus considerées."—*Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 105.

† "Enfin le goût du plaisir faisoit disparôitre habituellement toutes les lignes de séparation; et la société rassembloit à un grand bal, où chacun se presse, se coudoie, se place au hazard, ou selon son goût, et ne cherche, qu'a passer agreablement quelques heures."

Henry IV. and Louis XIV.* It was his custom to solicit from each of the frail fair ones, whose favours he had enjoyed, a ring or a snuff-box as a token of her affection and his victory, which with the name of the giver affixed, he added to his collection of *gages d'amour*. After his death, which happened in the year 1776, eight hundred of these snuff-boxes, and four thousand rings were found in his magazine of amorous trophies †

A much more profligate character than the prince of Conti, was the duke de Chartres, afterwards duke of Orleans, and last of all Philip Egalité. This monster learnt from his childhood to indulge every natural and unnatural desire, to practise all the vices both of the highest and of the lowest classes of society.‡ His reputation would have been as irrecoverably lost as his morals were corrupted, if he had not succeeded in giving

* *Observ. Anglois*, IV. p. 81. *Anecdotes*, II. p. 179.
† *Ibid.*
‡ See *Anecdotes*, &c. II. p. 92. The author of this work is a panegyrist of the duke. He is very differently pourtrayed in the *Vie de Louis Philippe Joseph duc d'Orleans*, *Londres*, 1789. It might be thought impossible to depict the character of the duke d'Orleans in too black colours, and yet it has been done in this libel, in which he is accused of several acts of poisoning, which though perhaps he might have been inclined, he never had the opportunity to perpetrate.

himself the appearance of a friend of the people. It does no more honour to the citizens of Paris, that they deemed the duke of Orleans a true patriot, than that they regarded Louis XVI. as their enemy and a traitor to their liberty and happiness. The duke of Orleans by building the Palais-Royal, was unintentionally a promoter of the revolution, as the Palais-Royal became a focus, and point of union for all the corruption and sedition of an immense metropolis. He intentionally promoted the revolution by his connections with the lovers of anarchy, and by his destructive bribes, without which neither the defection of the French guards, nor the insurrections in the suburbs, nor the September scenes, nor the hired tribunes would have taken place, and which at length led to the events of the tenth of August, and the deposition and the execution of the king.

In the third year of the revolution, the duke of Orleans was, as we must believe, seriously desirous of a reconciliation with the king whom he had so cruelly persecuted.* The good-hearted monarch was willing to forgive his repentant enemy,

* *Bertrand de Molleville*, I. p. 311.

and permitted the duke to wait upon him. Unfortunately the courtiers and adherents of the king were not made acquainted with the intention of the duke or the will of the sovereign. As soon, therefore, as they saw the former in the king's anti-chamber, they crowded about him, and some of them trod upon his toes and pushed him towards the door. When the door of the queen's apartment, where dinner was already upon the table, was opened, they exclaimed—"Let no one come near the table!" in order to give the duke to understand that he was supposed to be capable of putting poison into the dishes. The murmurs of indignation became more and more clamorous, and at length compelled the duke to quit the palace before he had been introduced to the king. As he went down stairs some one had even the ill-manners to spit after him. The duke rushed out foaming with fury and resentment. From that moment he swore eternal hatred against the king and queen. He did all in his power to deprive the king of his crown and of his life. Although the inscrutable decrees of providence permitted innocence to fall a sacrifice, they did not suffer the most atrocious villainy to

triumph. Philip Egalité was doomed to ascend the same scaffold, upon which the king's misfortunes had ended with his life.

The low persons who for a time had been mere satellites to the duke, became his masters. They annihilated the detestable instrument which they no longer found necessary for the accomplishment of their designs.

Of the brothers of Louis XVI. Monsieur had been unpopular even before the revolution, and the count d'Artois was universally hated on account of his extravagance, his barefaced profligacy and his exorbitant pride.* The sums which the two brothers of the king had drawn from the royal treasury at a time of the greatest public distress, amounting to upwards of twenty-eight millions of livres,† could not fail to excite the indignation of the people. This indignation was increased by the consideration of the objects, and of the promoter of their profusion, especially of that of the count d'Artois. This prince had at different times been allowed

* *Anecdotes*, &c. II. p. 6, &c.

† *Historical Magazine*, VII. p. 177, &c. *Anecdotes*, II. p. 4.

many hundred thousand livres for his stables. The count was accused of leading the queen into similar extravagances, of finding access through her means to the royal exchequer, and of rendering her as indifferent to the welfare of the people; and to the public opinion, as he was himself. He displayed his haughty insolence not only towards the public,* but also towards the ladies, and even to some of the highest rank. Once, at a masquerade he addressed the duchess de Bourbon with the same impudent libertinism as if he had been speaking to a common prostitute. The princess, affronted, raised the fringe of the mask which concealed the features of the person who had used such improper language to her. As soon as she perceived that it was the count d'Artois, she immediately walked away without deigning to bestow a single reproach upon him.† The haughty prince, conceiving himself highly insulted by the behaviour of the duchess, hastened after her, and broke her mask upon her face. The princess quietly

* An example of which we find in *Anecdotes*, &c. II, p. 63.

† *Ibid.* II. p. 65, 66.

withdrew from the ball-room, and would not even have made any complaint respecting the ill-treatment she had received, unless the count d'Artois had thought it necessary, in order to complete his revenge, to make public the insult which he had offered her. Upon this, the princess, her husband, and her whole family appealed to the king. The king called his brother an *Etourdi,* and obliged him to make the necessary apologies to the lady whom he had insulted. A duel also took place between the duke de Bourbon and the count d'Artois, in which, however, neither of the combatants was wounded.

In the preceding reigns not only the brothers of the monarch, but also his favourites, and other men of consequence about the court, had been guilty of similar acts of insolence, of equal or greater profusion, than the count d'Artois, without exciting an equal degree of indignation in the people. If among the rest of the princes and princesses of the royal family of France, there were none who distinguished themselves by obnoxious vices and crimes, neither were there any who merited the public esteem by their virtues, actions, accomplish-

ments or talents;* the duchess of Orleans and madame Elizabeth alone excepted. Unfortunately under Louis XVI. the deficiency of virtue and talent proved more detrimental than did in other times the greatest criminality in persons of the highest rank. Under the former kings, it would have been considered as a high degree of merit in the princes and princesses of the blood, if they did not interfere in the concerns of the state, if they did not attempt to ruin, or otherwise privately to injure any one.†

With the greater part of the nobles of the court the case was the same as with the princes: they were rather men without merit than men of any great demerit, more deserving of contempt than of detestation. This deficiency both of great vices and crimes, and of great virtues and abilities, is perhaps one of the

* *Anecdotes*, II. p. 150.

† "Les princes n'avoient aucune participation aux affaires, ils n'entroient point au conseil; ils n'ont contribué directement au choix d'aucun ministre, determiné aucune opération. On doit aussi rendre cet hommage à la vérité, qu'ils n'ont jamais usé de l'ascendant de leur rang, et de leur accès auprès du trône contre personne; qu'on ne peut leur imputer aucun acte tyrannique, ni d'avoir prêté leur appui à l'injustice."—*Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 49.

most certain symptoms of the decline or degeneracy of the higher orders, which renders them incapable of maintaining the privileges acquired for them by their ancestors. The principal vices of the nobles under the reign of Louis XVI. were their inordinate love of gaming, of horse-racing, of mistresses, and the destructive profusion into which these passions led them. It is still mentioned with indignation in France, that formerly it was quite fashionable among the nobility, to incur debts, and by not paying them to ruin thousands of industrious and honest families;* that the high-born prodigals seemed to consider the magnitude of their debts as a thing that did them credit, and that these debts formed a criterion by which the rank of the debtor might be estimated. The reigning vices of the men became also the vices of the women. Ladies of rank, or those who wished to be considered as such, gamed, squandered their fortune and involved themselves in debt, like the men. They had their lovers and expen-

* The greatest indignation was excited by the enormous debts of the prince de Guimené, and those of the cardinal de Rohan.

sive gew-gaws, as the men had their mistresses and horses.* They also murdered their time with the same frivolous amusements and dissipation as the men.† Happy marriages and conjugal fidelity became more rare than ever. Public illicit connections with other men than those whose name they bore were the prevailing fashion, and therefore ceased to give any offence. People married in compliance with the will of their parents, or from other motives of convenience, that, after the nuptial knot was tied, they might enter into a still closer private union with the objects of their hearts. These connections assumed the exact character of matrimonial unions and the perpetual change of lovers and mistresses, which was formerly so much in vogue, disappeared almost entirely under Louis XVI.‡ With married women none of their male acquaintance were more rarely seen than their husbands,

* *La singe, la perruche, la levrette, l'epagneul, l'angora, les petits négres*, were successively the fashionable toys of the French ladies: the most expensive were the horses.—*De la Croix Spectateur François avant la Revolution*, p. 107, 109.

† " C'est dans nos amusemens tristes et frivoles, qu'il faut chercher la cause de cette inertie, et de cette langueur, qui nous tuent."—*Ibid.*

‡ See *Du Gouvernement*, and *De la Croix Spect.* p. 4, &c.

and with none did they less frequently meet in society. The lover generally defrayed the expences of the toilet and other contingent expences of his mistress. But if he was too poor, or not sufficiently liberal, to satisfy the continual demands of fashion and the love of play, the lady applied to the person whose name she bore; and it was only when she had accounts to settle with milliners, jewellers, and other dealers in fashionable wares, or when her purse required to be replenished after losses at play, that she bestowed a civil look or word upon her nominal husband.*

One of the principal causes of the corruption of morals in the capital of France had long been the different theatres, and especially the grand opera, the company belonging to which amounted to three hundred persons.† The ministers of Louis XVI. in compliance with the wishes of their virtuous sovereign, endeavoured to correct the scandalous abuses generated in this school of voluptuousness and vice, and to restrain the loose conduct of the actors and actresses by some kind of discipline. But all these attempts at a

* *De la Croix Spect.* p. 4. † *Observ. Angl*, III. p. 226.

reformation of the opera were without the smallest permanent effect.* The opera remained, or became even in a higher degree than it had been before, a school of debauchery, which contained none but the most profligate characters, which received no additions but such as were furnished by the licentiousness of a corrupted capital. It was, and remained, the receptacle of prostitution, adultery, and every kind of gross sensuality. Vices and enormities of every description, which were safe no where else, found refuge in the bosom of the grand opera.

One of the most acute observers of modern French manners has admitted into his work an ironical dedication to one of the most celebrated actresses of the day, as containing a faithful picture of the manners of the capital of France.† For the same reason I shall insert here a translation of this dedication to Mademoiselle du Thé.

"It is not without admiration," thus the author addresses his heroine, "that I contemplate the pinnacle of fame to which

*. *Observ. Angl.* III. p. 224.

† ..... "par une ironie soutenue trace le tableau le plus vrai, et le plus effrayant de la corruption des mœurs de cette capitale."—*Observ. Angl.* III. p. 239.

you and your associates have attained. Fortunately for us, we do not live in those times of barbarism when rigid virtue reigned under the protection of the laws. Amiable licentiousness has at length, under the name of liberty, procured full scope for the indulgence of all our desires. You triumph, ye divine magicians, and your fascinating charms have entirely changed the face of all France.

"Our palaces, our hotels are at present merely the gloomy residences of unloved wives. Our joyous youth throng to your delightful *petites maisons*, the seats of love, and of every species of pleasure.

"Is it not you, ye goddesses of fashion, whose voice decides every thing in the empire of taste? Your yard-long feathers are the standard for all France. Many, who dare not imitate you altogether, emulate, at least, your attractions and your ornaments upon a confined scale, in order to render themselves more pleasing. Heavenly century, in which all prejudices, all laws are trodden under foot, all ranks and ages confounded, all excesses approved! Thou wilt remain eternally memorable in history.

" To you and your associates, fascinating du Thé, we are indebted for these happy alterations in our manners. To you belongs the honour of introducing them, and you enjoy it. You embellish our public promenades, when you appear there in your elegant or magnificent carriages. Wherever you are seen all eyes are fixed upon you; to you is paid universal adoration.

" Your privileges, ye goddesses of the day, are as great as they are sacred, and how should they fail to be so? You belong to the most valuable articles of commerce, and therefore nothing is more equitable than that you should partake of the happy liberty to which commerce is entitled. You form, under the auspices of the goddess of love, an independent republic. Your revenues are more secure than those of the state, for they are raised from the first necessaries of life. They are the more secure, as you collect and distribute them yourselves, without the assistance of any intermediate person. You would not exchange the produce of your charms for the best paid pension of the first duchess of the realm.

" Since this happy revolution, nothing

is left to obstruct you in your enterprizes. Hymen is become so much an object of ridicule that he scarcely dares to shew his face. You appear publicly in the carriages of your lovers; your servants have their livery; and you often wear the jewels of their wives. Your *petites maisons* are raised from the ruins of great houses, and form in the suburbs and on the Boulevards a kind of rampart, which incloses the capital and secures your empire for ever.

"Now let any one say that the French nation is foolish, that its manners and customs are contrary to common sense; never was it more polished than at present.

"You make pleasure your purpose, men your object, and the public welfare the ultimate end of all your sublime speculations. Like perpetual sacrifices you are continually upon the altar, and make more men happy in the course of twenty-four hours than most other women in the whole course of their lives. Yes, fair ladies, you constitute the luxury which is indispensably necessary to the existence of a great state, and whose mighty attraction draws opulent strangers with their gold into the country.

Twenty modest citizens' wives produce less accession to the royal revenue than one of you. You are the friends of all ranks, and the wives of all husbands."

One of the most celebrated dancers and courtezans of the day was Mademoiselle Guimard, the queen's counsellor in matters relating to dress. This little meagre creature exercised an unbounded influence over men of all ranks.* Her *petite maison* was termed the Temple of Terpsichore. "If our courtezans," says the *Observateur Anglois*, "do not, like those of ancient Greece, cause pyramids to be built, they, however, erect abodes of pleasure, little palaces, which produce as great a consumption of wealth as has ever been bestowed upon the most splendid monuments of antiquity. Was it ever known at Athens or Rome, that a public courtezan possessed two theatres at once, like Mademoiselle Guimard? When was it ever known that the prostitute of a capital drew the best actors from three stages, to make them subservient to her emolument? General rumour

* *Observ. Angl.* II. p. 160.—"One of her lovers was the bishop of Orleans, alluding to whom Mademoiselle Arnoux said of Mademoiselle Guimard: I cannot conceive how this little silk-worm keeps herself so lean, as she feeds upon such a juicy leaf."

reported, that the court had been obliged to prohibit the principal actors of the French and Italian theatres from playing at Mademoiselle Guimard's, because they after that chose to retire, and would no longer act for the public."*

If we consider every thing that has hitherto been adduced respecting the defects of the constitution of the French monarchy, the abuses of the administration, and the consequent corruption of morals, can we justly affirm that the French monarchy was a machine irreparably damaged, and which required to be taken to pieces, before a strong and healthy body could be composed out of its constituent parts? I answer, from the fullest conviction, that it was not. A very small portion of the powers and means by which the monarchy was destroyed would have been sufficient to

* It is a very just observation of Madame Roland's, that before and during the revolution very few persons were to be found who possessed the talents requisite for filling high situations in the state. "La France étoit comme epuisée d'hommes; c'est une chose vraiment surprenante que leur disette dans cette revolution; il n'y a guère eu que des pigmées. Ce n'est pas, qu'il manquât d'esprit, de lumières .... mais cette force d'âme .... cette étendue de vues, dont la reunion constitue le caractere .... on la cherchepartout—p. 20. La chose, qui m'ait le plus surpris ..... c'est l'universelle médiocrité. Elle passe tout ce que l'imagination peut se représenter, et cela dans tous les degrés, &c.—*Appel.* II. 7.

reform the defective and degenerate constitution of the kingdom; to remedy the numerous abuses of the administration; gradually to improve the public education, manners, and administration of justice; and all this without violently dissolving the ancient form of government; without annihilating the two higher orders of the nation and ruining many thousand families; without overwhelming every town and province with murder and desolation. But with the persons who, previous to the revolution, guided the helm of the state, and those who seized it after the revolution, things could not go otherwise than they did. In fact, it is a melancholy consideration that one of the greatest nations on the face of the earth was forced to destroy itself and many of its neighbours, because such men were in such situations, and adopted such measures. If, for example, Calonne and Necker had possessed a little less confidence in themselves and a little more discretion, and Louis XVI. somewhat more firmness and less pliability, the revolution would never have happened. Even after it had broken out, many conjunctures occurred in which the change of a single person, the alter-

ation of a single resolution might have arrested the whole course of events, or given it another direction. If we consider the great number of means by which France might have been saved, and the great facility with which they might have been carried into execution, we feel more and more that it was by the most astonishing fatality that France was precipitated into the abyss.*

On the whole France was never in a more flourishing state, especially with regard to trade and commerce than under the reign of Louis XVI.† The government could not so justly be called oppressive as weak. Arbitrary interruptions of the course of justice, arbitrary imprisonments, or banishments, were infinitely less frequent than formerly. Even at the court, prodigality and licentiousness of manners had rather diminished than increased. Of the five milliards with which the public revenue was burdened, and the deficit thence arising which excited so much clamour, only the smallest

* "Si l'on réfléchit à la simplicité des ces moyens, et à la facilité de leur exécution, on sentira de plus en plus, que la plus étonnante fatalité a precipité la France dans l'abyme." *Du Gouvernement*, p. 168.

† .... "Cet état s'est élevé au plus haut degré de splendeur, de prosperité et de richesse.

part was debt contracted by Louis XVI. and this deficit might easily have been covered without the necessity of recurring to violent or dangerous measures.*

* "Three measures," says the excellent author of the work *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 165—168, "might, if they had been adopted, have made the formidable deficit disappear, viz. 1. A prudent diminution of the army and navy expences; the abolition of unnecessary posts in the king's household; the suppression of a part of the *benefices de la finance*; diminution of the expences of the annual advances, as of the pensions and gratifications. All these together would have produced an annual saving of fifty millions. 2. A tax, to the amount of a tenth, upon government-annuities and other public effects. This would certainly have produced an annual revenue of twenty-five millions. 3. A duty upon articles of luxury, which would not have affected the more indigent classes of the community at all. By these measures, the public credit would, no doubt, have been restored in a few years; and it would have been easy to borrow about 400 millions, in order to pay off the greater part of the *dette exigible*, as it was termed, of 560 millions. The remaining part of this *dette exigible* might have been paid off, in a few years, from the produce of the tenth upon annuities, and the taxes upon articles of luxury. Finally, it might have been foreseen that the gradual diminution of the government-annuities, which amounted to 1,600,000 livres annually, combined with some reforms in the administration, would increase the public revenue of the state twelve millions; and that consequently the heavy burdens of the people might be diminished to the same amount." As just and clear as all this reasoning appears to me, I cannot, however, agree in opinion with this author, "that a restoration of the former pomp and splendour of the court would have had the effect of preserving or recovering the respect of the people towards the sovereign, his ministers and courtiers," p. 192, 193. The recluse mode of life of the royal family would of itself have done them no injury, but rather have increased the affection and respect of the people towards them, if it had been combined with a really frugal and firm administration of the state, by which the burdens of the people would have been gradually di-

The revolution took place when, in the month of June, 1789, a part of the states-general, without the concurrence of the two higher orders, and in opposition to the will of the king, constituted themselves a national assembly, and were acknowledged by the nation as their representatives with unlimited powers. This is not the place to enter into a circumstantial detail of the principal epochs of the revolution. My object is merely to consider the part which the female sex has acted in the storms with which it was attended. With this view I divide the period of the revolution into three epochs. The first begins with the breaking out of the revolution, and ends with the 10th of August, 1792, which completed the downfal of the throne and of the reigning dynasty. The second includes the reign of terror, which did not end till the execution of Robespierre and his associates. The third comprehends the period which has elapsed from the death of that monster to the present time.

minished. Let us only recollect the mode of life, the court and the administration of the great Frederic of Prussia. Mere external pomp does not long dazzle the minds of a people.

From the first moment of the revolution, an incredible infatuation seized the minds of almost the whole of the nation. Liberty was the magic word which inflamed every imagination; and the love of liberty became a reigning fashion, which, under a variety of shapes, drove a fickle and volatile people from one extreme to another, and impelled men destitute both of virtue and of patriotism to sacrifice their own real interests, nay their lives themselves, not merely without murmuring, but even with a playful gaiety.* The parliaments renounced their rights, and urged the convening of the states, who soon after annihilated the powers of those whom they had formerly considered as their representatives. The army, which from its very nature ought to be devoted to the throne, relinquished the cause of its sovereign, even sooner than the people,†

* Il est à remarquer, que dans cette seule nation regne une puissance suprême appelée mode. Elle tient son empire de la légèrete, qui adopte sans examen, de la vivacité de l'imagination, qui s'attache promptement à un objet, et du penchant à l'imitation. Quand on a suivi attentivement les progrés de la révolution, on voit clairement, que la mode, dans les commencemets, a tout mis en mouvement, et enfin determiné les cruautés mêmes.—C'est en réfléchissant à la puissance de la mode sur les esprits Français, et à leur caractere enthusiaste, qu'on peut concevoir, comment des hommes sans patriotisme, ni vertu, ont agi en sens contraire de leurs propres intérêts."—*Du Gouvernement*, p. 198.

† *Bertrand*, I. p. 27.

and turned its arms against the prince from whom it had received them.* The town of Versailles was indebted for its existence and its wealth solely to the monarchs, and yet this town displayed the most furious hostility to monarchy, the abolition of which was sure to produce its own ruin.† No city in the kingdom lay under so great obligations to the munificence of the kings and the luxury of the great, as the dissipated capital, where virtue was considered as a jest, and the thirst of riches and pleasure had for centuries been the ruling passions of the inhabitants. In a city so sunk in effeminacy and voluptuousness as Paris, the love of liberty must have seemed as great a stranger as luxury in ancient Sparta.‡ And yet the people, or the mob of Paris, raised insurrection after insurrection, till the throne and all that surrounded it was laid in the dust, and out

* Comment l'armée qui par essence est devouée au trône .... s'est laissé entraîner par l'effervescence générale, et a tourné contre le prince les armes, qu'elle avoit reçues de lui pour sa defense.—*Du Gouvernement*, &c. *ibid.* p. 201.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Il me seroit encore plus facile de demontrer, que dans une capitale, amottie par les delices de tout genre, dans une ville, où la pureté des mœurs étoit un objet de raillerie, où les cœurs étoient dévorés de la soif des richesses, l'amour de la liberté étoit aussi étranger que pouvoit l'être le luxe à Sparte."—*Ibid.* p. 201.

of its ruins rose the monster of anarchy, to which no where so many victims were immolated as precisely in Paris itself. The fashion of liberty was just as capricious and changeable as any other fashion. Mirabeau, Necker, La Fayette, Petion, Bailly, Orleans, Robespierre, and Marat were in their turns adored as heroes of patriotism, and afterwards either outlawed or guillotined, as the worst of criminals, or at least execrated and insulted. Blind enthusiasm impelled, not merely the multitude, but also the ruling parties, to act within a short period of time upon quite contradictory plans, to adopt measures the most opposite to each other.* Some friends of republicanism made an attempt in the year 1791, after the king's return from Varennes, to abolish monarchy, but the proposal was rejected with indignation. On the 7th of July, 1792, a member of the national assembly declared, that he was as much against a republic being established in France as a despotic monarchy; and he invited all who were of the same opinion to avow it by standing up. The whole assembly immediately rose, and decreed unani-

* *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 458—460. *Bertrand*, III. p. 217.

mously and by acclamation, that those who should propose a republican government, or the establishment of two chambers, should be devoted to public execration.* The remembrance of this decree was so soon obliterated, or the sentiments of the representatives of the nation underwent such a sudden change, that on the 21st of September, the same year, the national convention decreed the abolition of monarchy.

Even the nobility and the dignified clergy could scarcely lose so much, or at least they could not lose more by a change of the established constitution than the female sex, which for nearly three centuries past had reigned at the French court, and from the court had extended its sway over every town and province of the kingdom. If there were to be no more despotic kings, no ruling ministers or favourites of monarchs, no more festivities, levees, and brilliant assemblies at the court, how could the all-influencing mistresses of kings or ministers, how could the arbitresses of taste and fashion, of literary and every other kind of merit, continue to exist?

* *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 458—460. *Bertrand*, III. p. 217.

Yet even the women sacrificed all the advantages which had formerly been the most dear to them, with the same enthusiastic ardour as the two first orders and the principal towns and corporations of the kingdom relinquished their former privileges. The women took the most active part in all the festivals of liberty, particularly in the memorable festival of confederation, held at Paris the 14th of July, 1790.* The women in the provinces, who were not able themselves to attend this festival, expressed their attachment to the cause of liberty by going in procession, in their best attire, to meet the sons of the country going to swear the sacred oath of liberty and equality, or by attending them on their return, and presenting them with refreshments. In some places the ladies waited many hours and days upon the high roads, in order to receive the deputies to the festival of confederation, and to invite them to civic entertainments and dances. If the patriots accepted these invitations, the ladies took off their martial accoutrements with their own fair hands, and the deputies imagined

* *Anecdotes*, IV. p. 80, &c.

themselves transported back into the romantic ages of French chivalry.

When dangers external and internal began to threaten the new-born liberty of France, the women not only encouraged their husbands, brothers, and lovers, bravely to defend their country, but they exerted themselves to the utmost to contribute towards its defence. After the example of the women of the United States of America,* many thousands of zealous female patriots laid their trinkets, their pin-money, or the fruits of their economy upon the altar of the country. Many women, inspired with enthusiastic patriotism and love of liberty, renounced the character of their sex, and taking their posts among the combatants for freedom, gained the laurels of victory, or died the death of heroes in the field of blood. On the 10th of August, a Mademoiselle Theroigne signalized herself

* In the year 1781, the lady of general Washington wrote, in the name of her sex, an animated letter of thanks to the brave defenders of the country, in which she at the same time called upon her sister-patriots to administer to the necessities of their valiant protectors from their own means. This letter, which is to be found in *Anecdotes*, &c. IV. 310, was publicly read in the churches, and produced such an effect that the most distinguished ladies of the country raised a voluntary subscription for the relief of the suffering warriors.

among the valiant band that stormed the palace of the Tuilleries, by rallying those who fled, and making a second attack at the head of the Marsellois. She was rewarded for her conduct on that day, by a seat among the members at the national assembly. Moore saw this Amazon, a few days subsequent to the 10th of August, take her seat among the members, in a surtout, with the uniform of the national guards. She had a martial air, which would not have ill become a brave man.*

The heads of the ruling parties forgot the proofs of patriotism and courage which the French women had displayed from the beginning of the revolution, as readily as they did the voluntary sacrifices made by the king, the nobles, and the clergy. The fair sex was never treated in so cruel and shameful a manner, nor did it ever display such great and at the same time such odious qualities as during the reign of terror, which commenced with the 10th of August, and in the course of the succeeding year spread its unexampled horrors over all

* *Journal*, I. p. 117.

France. When human nature, by the highest frenzy of the passions and the concurrence of extraordinary circumstances, is thrown, as it were, out of its orbit, phenomena take place of which no similar instances are to be found in history, or at least only in that of some few periods which deviate widely from the ordinary course of events. Can any thing be conceived more incredible, more unnatural, than that contempt of death should become among a great nation a fashion which exceeded every other in the universality of its sway; and that this contempt of death should display itself as universally and still more conspicuously in the weaker sex than in the stronger? Who, without the events of the reign of terror before his eyes, would imagine it possible, that the weaker sex, and the fairest part of that sex, could become the principal promoters and the principal victims of infuriate party-rage? That men, in times of danger, when they are not sure of their lives for an hour, should endeavour to enjoy the uncertain moments which fate allows them in every way they can devise, with a total disregard of all the laws of mora-

lity and decency; or that the soldiers of a nation should fight with the most determined bravery at times when the nation itself is oppressed by the most cruel despotism, and endures this oppression with the most abject cowardice—these are phenomena of much more frequent occurrence.

The events of the 10th of August were wished for and brought about by all the ruling parties that were in opposition to the court. The secret republicans hoped that in a popular insurrection the royal family might be murdered, or at least the king dethroned. The Orleans party flattered themselves that the king would be deposed, and their leader appointed regent of France. The Girondists, who at this time had the preponderance in the national assembly, and even in the Jacobin-club, had long expected that the national assembly, over-awed by the clamours of the people, would declare that Louis XVI. had forfeited the crown, proclaim the dauphin king, and nominate the heads of their party to be his perpetual ministers during his minority.* As all parties concurred in the events of the 10th of August, that day was cried up by them all as the great

* *Bertrand*, II. 251. III. p. 39.

day of salvation, and sanctioned by the people, who were guided by these parties. The dangerous example of insurrection had now been given, and the most ungovernable part of the rabble let loose to murder, rob, and plunder with the prospect not only of perfect impunity, but even of ample rewards. All those who were ambitious of power, employed against those who actually were in power, the same means by which the throne had been overturned. The Girondists, the most powerful among the assailants of the throne, fell the first. They were soon followed by the Orleans party, and these by the Terrorists. The smallest party which shortly before the 10th of August had scarcely dared to raise its voice, at length remained victorious.

"The cannon of St. Antoine, and the sabres of the Marseillois," says Moore,* "seemed to have exterminated the virtues of the king on the 10th of August, and every day of his imprisonment in the Temple seemed to add some new article to the list of vices, of which he was now accused, and which were never heard of before." The avowed adherents of the king and of

* *Journal*, II. p. 403.

the monarchy, were, on the 10th of August and the subsequent days, either massacred or imprisoned, or obliged to quit the country, or to conceal themselves in obscure retreats. The secret friends of both were obliged to be more reserved than before in expressing any sentiments favourable to the cause of the fallen monarch and the demolished throne. The enemies of the king on the other hand, had now perfect liberty to invent and disseminate the most atrocious calumnies. The most improbable assertions began at length to be credited, as they were repeated from all quarters with the utmost confidence. A very perceptible change took place in the public opinion after the 10th of August. The false construction which was put upon the contents of the papers found in the apartments of the king, especially of those discovered in the iron-chest, produced or confirmed the notion, that he had conspired to betray the country, and this opinion excited an universal indignation against the no less innocent than unfortunate monarch.* The splen-

* *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 279, 460, 461. After what Bertrand has said in his memoirs, no one can any longer entertain a doubt that the king and the queen faithfully adhered

did victories which the republican armies soon after achieved, also tended to reconcile the national vanity of many to the idea of a republic, to which they had before borne the strongest aversion.

In the very first days subsequent to the 10th of August, it became manifest that the convention had lost almost as much as the king by the late insurrection, and that the power of the nation was not in the hands of its representatives, but in those of the *commune* in Paris, especially of the demagogues who had the greatest weight in the general council of the *commune*.* The strict domiciliary visits, the arbitrary arrests, the pillaging or sequestration of the property of persons arrested, or who had absconded, all of which were practised by the secretaries of Paris, or by the council of the *commune*, contrary to the will of the convention, announced the commencement of the reign of terror, which was confirmed by the disgraceful and inhuman scenes of September. Danton and some other audacious miscreants, planned the

to the constitution, I. p. 216, 217. II. p. 167. III. 219, 220. Roland and Claviere believed this; Madame Roland alone doubted it *a priori*. *Appel.* I. 36. II. 8.

* *Moore's Journal*, II. 185.

massacres of these days; and they were perpetrated by some hundreds of hired assassins.* All foreigners who were at that time in Paris, were of opinion that in no other city of Europe would it have been possible so easily to collect such a number of assassins, and that the inhabitants of no other great city would have suffered a few hundred miscreants to continue their saguinary trade for several successive days, with so little opposition as those of Paris.† During these days of blood, the instigators of the carnage learned to know the power of terror and the cowardice of the people in their full

* Mallet du Pan (*Considerations sur la nature de la revolution en France*, p. 42.) asserts that Roland and the rest of the Girondists vindicated the Septemberscenes, and the massacres at Avignon. As far as respects Roland this is certainly erroneous. *Appel de Madame Roland*, I. 71. Most probably none of the Girondists really approved of the proceedings of the Septembrisers, although some of them, from fear or other motives, might endeavour to exculpate what they had done.

† *Moore*, I. p. 314, 315. *Madame Roland*, I. p. 73. "Tout Paris fût témoin de ces horrible scénes, exécutées par un petit nombre de bourreaux....Tout Paris laissa faire.... tout Paris fût maudit à mes yeux, et je n'esperai plus, que la liberté s'établt parmi des lâches, insensibles aux derniers outrages qu'on puisse faire à la nature, à l'humanité; froids spectateurs d'attentats, que le courage de cinquante hommes armésau roit facilement empeché....Aussi ce n'est pas la première nuit qui m'etonne; mais quatre jours; et des curieux alloient voir ces spectacles. Non, je ne connois rien dans les annales des peuples les plus barbares, de comparable à ces atrocités."

extent. From this period they became the more audacious in proportion as the people shewed itself more abject; and they gave themselves no concern about the latter, as long as they had at their command a gang of venal ruffians, ready to imbrue their hands in blood whenever they should be required. During the September-scenes, the rabble learned to trample upon justice, innocence, merit, humanity, decency; to pay respect neither to rank, nor sex, nor age. One of the first and most shocking atrocities of these days, was the massacre of the princess Lamballe, with the horrid indignities that were afterwards offered to her body, and the carrying of her head upon a pike through the streets, and even to the Temple for the express purpose of exposing it to the view of the queen and royal family.* Who could have imagined it possible that among these assassins there could have been men like those who saved the life of the chevalier Bertrand, brother to the minister Bertrand de

* The head, being fixed on a pike, was carried to the Temple, for the express purpose of shocking the royal family, and the queen in particular, with a sight so dreadfully agonizing.—A new dictionary is needed to furnish words expressive of such unheard-of wickedness!" *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 315.

Molleville? * The tribunal established in the Abbaye, for the pretended trial of the prisoners, the members of which acted alternately as judges and executioners, had delivered to execution all who had been brought before it. When the chevalier was summoned, one of those who were conducting him, struck with the calmness and air of security he observed in his countenance, said to him, "You have the appearance of an honest man; a person conscious of guilt has not such a countenance."—"I am conscious of no guilt," said the chevalier. "I am sure I must have been arrested by mistake." "Then," said the other, "fear nothing. Speak firm before the judge and rely upon my support. We shall bring you off as sure as my name is Michel." The unexpected good fortune at finding a protector among these assassins, imparted to the chevalier all the steadiness requisite to enable him to support the horrible aspect of his judges. Being arrived at the bar of the tribunal of blood, several interrogatories were put to him, which he answered with the readiness of conscious innocence; and

* *Bertrand*, III. p. 135, &c. *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 271.

Michel advocated his cause with such energy and success, that he was declared innocent by the unanimous acclamation of the assembly, which was followed by a formal declaration of the tribunal to that effect, and he was ordered to be set at liberty. Upon this Michel and one of his comrades, who had seemed equally interested in his fate, took him under the arm, and conducted him to the outer gate of the prison, where the massacres were committed, and loudly proclaimed him innocent. The executioners were drawn up in two opposite rows, their weapons ready to strike, when the words *citoyen innocent* reached their ears. They instantly surrounded him, lifted him in their arms with clamorous transports of joy; and with faces and hands besmeared with blood they hugged him by turns. He was forced to submit with a good grace to these horrible caresses, from which his vigorous conductors with difficulty relieved him, saying he was unwell, required rest, and that it would be cruel to detain him longer. After having disengaged him from the mob, Michel asked him if he had any relations in town, to whom he wished to be conducted. He answered that he had a sister-

in-law, to whose house he was going, but that he would not give them the trouble to accompany him, as he had sufficient strength left to walk by himself. He at the same time expressed his gratitude for their services, and offered them a handful of assignats as a small recompense for all they had done for him. They refused his money, and persisted in accompanying him. "We must answer for you," said one of them to him, "and we cannot leave you till we have seen you in safety. As for your assignats we will have none of them; the satisfaction of saving you is better than that. If you will give us leave to attend you to your sister's, it will do our hearts good to see so happy a meeting." The chevalier urged that his sister-in-law was so timid, and of such a delicate constitution, that the sight of strangers at so late an hour might alarm her; besides the blood on their clothes might do her harm, which would certainly give them pain. "Certainly," replied they, "but when you tell her that it was we who saved your life, she will be glad to see us. Depend upon it we will not frighten her. Come, sir, give us this satisfaction, it will not cost you so much

as the money you offered, and will afford us more pleasure." The chevalier was forced to yield to their entreaties. They accompanied him to the house where his sister-in-law resided. The joy of the family on seeing the chevalier was the more lively, as they had given him up for lost. Madame Bertrand being prepa ed for the strange visit she was to receive, consented to it without repugnance. Her heart was too full of joy and gratitude to be accessible to other sentiments. She only saw in these men, covered with blood, the deliverer of her husband's brother, and she received them as her benefactors. They were extremely touched by this reception, and with the joy of Madame Bertrand and her family, who surrounded the chevalier and embraced him with many tears. Michel and his friend were delighted with this scene of happiness, which they justly considered as their own work. "It is you and I, my friend, after all," said Michel to his comrade, "who have saved the life of this honest man." To this the other assented, the tears at the same instant falling from the eyes of both. They had the discretion not to prolong their visit beyond a quarter of an hour,

and in taking leave of the chevalier, they repeatedly thanked him for the pleasure he had procured them. Bertrand de Moleville exclaims with justice, at the conclusion of this narrative—"How can we account for a fact so very extraordinary, that those who are employed as the assassins of their fellow-creatures, should, almost in the same moment, shew themselves sensible of the most pleasing sensations of benevolence and compassion to a man quite unknown to them?" Even those who have most deeply examined the human heart must be perplexed to give a satisfactory explanation to this phenomenon, which is perhaps without a parallel.*

Similar circumstances, equally unaccountable and inconsistent, are frequently met with in the history of the female sex during the reign of terror. Never were the women of France more active, and, if I may so express myself, more

* Among the instances of female heroism which were exhibited in the days of September, the following is recorded. A young lady named Sombreuil, threw herself between her father and the daggers of the assassins, who were about to murder him. The courage and desperation of the daughter, had such a powerful effect upon the ruffians, that they spared the father's life for that time. *Tableau des prisons de Paris*, p. 93.

omnipresent; never did they perform more good and more bad actions; never did they suffer more themselves or inflict greater sufferings on others; never did the weaker sex exhibit to the stronger more astonishing instances of fortitude, than during those days when reason and moderation were terms of reproach, and when prominent talents were accounted a crime. In the popular festivals, in the assemblies of the people, in insurrections, tumults, and massacres, in the courts and prisons, on the tribunes and scaffolds, the women acted either principal parts, or at least inferior characters of great importance. The conduct of many was so noble, and of many more so atrocious, that we scarcely know whether we ought more to admire the one or to detest the other.

During the reign of terror, the female republicans of Paris honoured no other public man with their favour in so high a degree, as Robespierre, the king of terror. This man, even at the time when the convention possessed all the great speakers of the revolution, was the favourite orator of the women. Whenever he went to the club of Jacobins, the pro-

portion of females in the galleries was always greater than usual.* On the day when he made his defence against the charges preferred against him by Louvet, the Parisian women crowded in such numbers to the assembly, that when he ascended the tribune, there were at least four times as many women seen in the galleries as men, and all the passages were thronged with his female admirers.† Robespierre's enemies, when they found themselves unable to crush his rising power, endeavoured to render him ridiculous, on account of his popularity with the women. "It is sometimes asked," says Condorcet in the *Chronique de Paris*,‡ "how it happens that such numbers of women are continually attending Robespierre wherever he is, at his own house, at the galleries of the Jacobins, of the Cordeliers, and of the convention. It is because the revolution is considered as a religion, of which Robespierre is the leader of a sect. He is a priest who has devotees, but it is evident that all his power is *en quenouille*.§ Robespierre

* *Moore's Journal*, II. 325. † *Ibid.* and p. 345.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ This expression is used in the ancient French chronicles relative to the succession of the crown, to declare that women are excluded: *la couronne en France ne tombe jamais en que-*

preaches, Robespierre censures; he is furious, grave, melancholy, affectedly exalted, followed in his opinions, and in his conduct; he thunders against the rich and the great; he lives on little, is moderate in his natural appetites; his chief mission is to speak, and he speaks continually. He refuses such offices in which he might be of service to the people, and chuses those in which he expects to govern them; he appears where he can make a figure, and disappears when the scene is occupied by others; he has all the characteristics, not of the leader of a religion, but of the leader of a sect; he attempts to establish a reputation of austerity which points to sanctity; he mounts on forms and talks of God and of providence; he calls himself the friend of the poor and of the weak; he is continually surrounded by women, and gravely accepts of their homage and admiration; he retires before danger, and nobody is so conspicuous when the danger is over. Robespierre is a priest, and never can be any thing more.—The French revolution affords instances of men and of events, that

nouille. It is now applied in other cases, and here implies that Robespierre's power is chiefly over women. *Moore's Journal*, II. 348.

acquire a certain degree of celebrity, merely because the national impetuosity magnifies and exaggerates every thing. These little men, these paltry events, will scarcely occupy four lines in the history of the revolution.

If such men as Condorcet and his friends could form so erroneous a judgment respecting the hypocritical tyrant, can it be surprizing if the softer sex were deceived by the sheep's clothing which the tiger assumed? The popularity which he enjoyed with the women, certainly contributed in no small degree to the gradual elevation of this monster. Nothing can, therefore, be more equitable, than that the women should bear their share of the execration with which the abettors of the tyrant have been, and to the latest period of time will continue to be loaded.

"How could we," exclaims the *Spectateur François*, "tolerate for two whole years this hypocrite, whose base soul was visible in his disgusting features, who betrayed his insolent egotism in every thing he said; who prostituted the terms of justice and humanity by continually using them in his sentences of death; who ridiculed our weakness by

talking to us about liberty, while he kept us in the most abject slavery; who dared to lay the nothingness of his talents in the balance against genius and heroism?

"How must all those be now ashamed of their servile adulation, who cringed to a tyrant so despicable in every point of view! By what magic arts did he attain to that height of power, of which we have seen him in possession? We all know the part which he acted in the constituent assembly. What an immeasurable distance between him and all the orators who then excited admiration by the charms of their eloquence and the sublimity of their ideas!

"In what post or situation in which he has since then been placed, did he ever display any superiority of character? His tedious, prolix, vague, and illogical harangues, could not bear examination, and fell into oblivion the moment they were pronounced. Never did he shew himself boldly at the head of any party. On the contrary, he always concealed himself in the time of danger, and did not appear till he could reap the fruits of the toil and of the valour of others. He was fickle in his attachments, and often deserted those who had most

flattered his vanity, and most promoted his designs. His jealousy of talents of every kind that threw his pretended patriotism into the shade, made him persecute them with the most rancorous hostility. Incapable of forming a great plan himself, or advancing with a firm step directly towards his object, he skulked about the supreme power, and feigned to shun it, that he might be urged to seize it by the clamours of the mob. He kept the nation in perpetual commotion, filled it with terror and suspicions, that it might look up to him alone for deliverance and tranquillity. Sometimes he seemed willing to reconcile himself with those whom he had oppressed, and to sacrifice to them those with whom he had before been connected. But he suddenly plunged them again into despair, and involved the friends of liberty and the adherents of royalty in one common destruction. He might justly be called an enemy to thinking, since it was necessary to display a mechanical veneration for his most contradictory humors and caprices, in order to gain his favour. He would have it believed that every thing good originated from him; every thing bad from the op

position made to his plans; that foreign kings and ministers wished for nothing so ardently as his destruction; that he was the palladium of France, and that if the state lost him, liberty would be annihilated, and the republic would be plunged into the deepest abyss of misery.

"Such was the miscreant who tyrannized so long over those who pretended to be the most inveterate enemies to tyranny. So far from raising the dagger against him, no one durst even murmur against the despotism which Robespierre had established in two assemblies of the representatives of the people. It is difficult to determine how far he would have carried his sway, and what duration he might have given it, if he had not been so precipitate in grasping at power, and had possessed prudence enough to have taken his steps with greater caution; if he had not threatened to exterminate all his enemies at once, and thus warned or compelled them to unite in his destruction." *

Most of the wretches whom Robespierre and his crew sent into the provinces to depopulate towns, to exterminate fa-

* *De La Croix Spect. pendant la revolution*, p. 151.

milies, to sweep away hundreds and thousands by the *guillotine*, by *fusillades*, or *noyades* from the face of the earth, were accompanied either by their wives or their mistresses, who vied with them in every art and act of cruelty, whereas the whole history of the revolution presents us with only a single instance of a woman whose mild humanity disarmed the ruffian whom her charms had subdued.* It is not possible, neither is it necessary, to enumerate all the horrible atrocities perpetrated by the ruffians, both male and female, whom Robespierre sent out to deluge the country with blood; for if any thing could afford the shadow of a reason for doubting the existence of a just, a beneficent, and an all-powerful deity, it would be a circumstantial history of the unheard-of barbarities committed by those monsters. I shudder while I at-

* This was Madame Tallien. See *Meyer's Fragments*. I. p. 130. Tallien, was one of the Septembrisers who repaired to Bourdeaux, with the view of inundating that town with blood, as Le Bon had done at Arras; Carriere at Nantes; Collot d'Herbois, at Lyons, &c. Madame Tallien saved the city that was doomed to destruction, by surrendering her hand to the blood-thirsty ruffian. An enemy of this lady called her once *Notre Dame de Septembre*. The gross injustice of this expression excited universal indignation. Roederer vindicated her character, and said that she rather deserved the appellation of *Notre Dame de Bon Secours*.

tempt to write down some instances of these atrocities.—The wife of the bloodthirsty Le Bon, used to have lists of the persons arrested brought to her every evening by the gaolers, and with her own hand placed the letter G against the names of those that were to be guillotined the next morning. One day an extraordinary spectacle of massacre was to be exhibited, in the execution of twenty-eight persons at once, among whom were thirteen young girls. Le Bon issued orders that the people should attend this spectacle, and these orders no one durst disobey but at the hazard of his life. A widow-lady who, on account of indisposition, was not able to be present at the execution herself, sent her daughter in her stead, having previously given her a strict charge not to shew the least signs of sympathy for the persons whose execution she was about to witness. The daughter promised to keep the command over herself, and she actually suppressed her emotions till the sixteenth victim was brought on the scaffold. In her she beheld one of the most intimate friends of her juvenile years, of whose sentence she had not had the least previous intimation. At this afflicting sight, tears burst from

her eyes in spite of all her endeavours to restrain them. Unfortunately the stroke of the guillotine did not completely separate the head from the body, so that the executioner was obliged to finish his work with a knife. At this horrid spectacle the young lady fainted, which being observed by the wife of Le Bon, who constantly sat upon the scaffold; the sanguinary fiend exclaimed—"Look at that monster of an aristocrat!—Secure her!" Both the mother and the daughter were immediately taken into custody; and the latter, two days after, atoned for her tears and fainting with her life.

The women of France were in general violent republicans, both during and after the period of terror; the *poissardes*, and the wives and daughters of the once privileged classes alone excepted.* What

* *Bemerkungen über Frankreich während der Feldzüge in den Jahren*, 1793—1795. (Observations on the state of France during the campaigns from the year 1793 to 1795) p. 169. The author of this work gives also some very interesting particulars respecting the sisterhood of the *poissardes* and their aristocratic spirit, p. 167. "When the Jacobins were at the zenith of their power, they continually accused the women of a disposition to aristocratic principles, and accordingly they also vented their fury most upon the women, as we shall see hereafter. Even at the present moment, the *parvenus riches*, or the persons who have made their fortunes by the revolution, are accused of having inherited, together with the estates, the sentiments of the opulent under the ancient *regime*. The wealthy of both sexes have forsaken the walks and other

principally rendered the middling and lower orders of society favourable to the revolution, was, that the rich and the noble were obliged to share all the public burdens equally with the poor; that the latter were permitted to sit and deliberate with the former; that they could even intimidate those by whose titles, privileges, and splendour they had formerly been overawed.* For the sake of these flattering advantages, both men and women sacrificed not only their superfluities and conveniences, but even the necessaries of life.† If a family had been disappointed of their share of the bread that was daily distributed among the people, the wife proved to her husband that the misfortune of being for a

places of public resort, which they formerly used to frequent the most. The women of this class wear either no cockades at all, or of such a small size as to be scarcely visible." *Meyer*, p. 40.

* *Ibid.* and *De la Croix*, p. 99. "Il semble si beau au mercenaire d'aller d'un pas égal avec le riche, de siéger, de délibérer avec lui, de lui parler du ton le plus familier; d'intimider celui, qui l'humiliot de ses titres, de ses privilegès, de son faste, de lui voir partager son service, ses corvées."

† "Les femmes lui consacrent leurs parures, leurs habitudes, leurs idées religieuses. Les privations ne coûtent rien à ces vrais republicains; les mets les plus grossiers leur semblent toujours assez bons, s'ils sont assaisonnés par le sentiment qui les enivre. Assurez leur du pain noir et l'egalité, ils ne demandent rien de plus à l'autorité, qu'ils ont créée, et qu'ils croient partager."

day without food was easy to be borne, and that liberty was an acquisition so valuable, that they ought cheerfully to make a few sacrifices to obtain it.

As zealous republicans, the women were generally the chief promoters of the insurrections and riots, or at least constituted a greater part of the mobs that assembled on those occasions. The women of France in general were used to spend less of their time in work than those of Germany. They had it therefore in their power to leave their domestic concerns without any great detriment, whereas the absence of the men immediately produced an interruption of business. When women were apprehended in riots, it was customary to punish them less severely than the men; and this privilege of their sex rendered them the more daring. Besides, hundreds or thousands of women assembled daily at the places where bread, flour, or coals were distributed, or at the tribunals of justice, and upon other public occasions. These mobs of women were constantly ready and inclined to raise commotions on the slightest occasion, and opportunities of this kind were seldom

wanting during the period of the revolution.*

As the women were the pincipal promoters of unlawful concourses of the people, it is the less surprizing that they were very numerous and active in all the legal assemblies, and at all judicial trials. In the assemblies of the *communes*, the women, it is true, seldom spoke, but they were generally the first that expressed their approbation or disapprobation of what was said. It is incredible to what inconveniences the French women submitted in their attendance upon the assemblies of the *communes*. They spent five or six hours in the most suffocating heat or intense cold, most wretchedly accommodated.

Vanity seemed to have little or nothing to do with the eagerness of the women to appear in the popular assemblies. Every one went in the most complete dishabille, and perhaps even without having washed

* The author of *Bemarkungen*, &c. p. 170, gives an account of a remarkable insurrection of women in Beauvais, which was excited by a female of infamous character who had been used to personate the goddess of liberty at popular festivals, and by false accusations and giving false evidence had brought several persons to the guillotine.

her hands or face, for fear of being too late. Women as well as men seated themselves just where they chanced to find places. The assembly was so crowded, that a person could scarcely discover his next-door neighbour. Private conversation was not allowed. If a person was not silent after having been called upon once, or at most twice, the interruption which he gave to the assembly was punished by his being turned out. At one time, the assemblies of the *communes* were held daily. During that period, scarcely any one worked after five in the afternoon. Foreigners, who observed the frequent distractions to which both sexes, particularly the female, were liable, justly remarked that the disorders occasioned by them in the domestic concerns of the French, would long continue to be felt.

Among the occurrences in which the female sex took a peculiar interest, during the period of the revolution, were the judicial proceedings respecting marriage, criminal trials, and the sentences of persons accused. On all these occasions the French women shewed a degree of effrontery, which gave disgust even at a period when both judges and juries

seemed to have lost all sense of justice, virtue, and decency. Every judicial investigation was an object of general attention, and the meanest servant-girl had something to say respecting the guilt or the innocence of the accused. The women were the first and the loudest in expressing their approbation or disapprobation, not only of the conduct of the accused, but also his judges, of the advocates on both sides, and the verdict of the jury. The female spectators were generally the most clamorous at the time when the juries left the court in order to deliberate upon the answers they were to return to the questions proposed to them. Foreigners often admired the eloquence and sound judgment with which the French women of every class in society, argued upon the subjects that fell under their discussion. Never since justices or tyrants have existed, was there a more nefarious tribunal than the revolutionary tribunal in Paris. Many cruel despots in ancient and modern times have caused innocent persons to be executed without trial, upon the charges of false accusers and false witnesses: but never durst the most cruel of these tyrants exercise such atrocities in the

face of his people.* That part of the Parisians who surrounded the tribunal, were, if possible, of a still viler description than the judges, accusers, and juries. These people appeared to wish for nothing but murder and destruction. They never seemed to think the number of victims large enough. They murmured at the tardiness of the tribunal in pronouncing sentence, which they threatened to anticipate by summary execution. After the fall of the tyrant, the people seemed at once to have changed their character. They applauded the preservation of the lives of their fellow-creatures, as they had once approved their condemnation; they embraced the prisoners who were acquitted, as they had recently derided and execrated those who were sentenced to die.† "Continually," says the *Spectateur François*, "are we the sport of our passions and prejudices, and incapa-

* See an animated description of the revolutionary tribunal in *De la Croix Spectat. pendant. la revolution*, p. 69, &c.

† "Quel est donc ce peuple, qui offre des contrastes si étonnans? Il y a quelques jours, il sembloit ne vouloir, que meurtres, que destruction; le nombre des victimes ne lui paroissoit jamais assez grand; il murmuroit contre la lenteur des jugemens, et menaçoit des les devancer par ses exécutions: aujourdhui il applaudit à la liberté, à la conservation de ses semblables; il ne veut plus voir de coupables: il coûvre de ses embrassemens et l'innocence qui triomphe, et la justice, qui absout."—*De la Croix Spec.* p. 184.

ble of following the dictates of reason. Sometimes slavishly submissive, sometimes furiously independent, we pass from one extreme to the other."

Long before the revolution, the French women had been reproached for attending public executions, regardless of the delicacy and modesty natural to their sex. This peculiarity in their character, was displayed during the revolution in the most striking manner. The executions daily and hourly increasing in number, so far from fatiguing and satiating either the women or men, seemed only to increase their thirst of blood, and their desire of witnessing these horrible sights.* The spectators went from these scenes of carnage to the theatres, which even in the days of the execution of the king and of the queen, were not less numerously attended than at other times. The French nation, and particularly the city of Paris, will have occasion to justify themselves to posterity for having produced and so long endured such monsters as Robespierre, Danton, Collot d'Her-

* "Quelle leçon pour ce peuple, qui pouvoit applaudir à tant d'actes de cruauté, dont la vue sembloit ne jamais se rassassier du plus horrible spectacle."—*De la Croix Spect.* &c. p. 155.

bois, Jourdan, Carrier, Le Bon, and their assassins; for having looked with indifference upon such scenes of blood as the massacres of September, in Paris and Versailles, and the enormities equally atrocious perpetrated at Arras, Nantes, Lyons, and Avignon; and for having, during several successive years, taken the part of injustice and cruelty against innocence and merit, in the courts and before the tribunals. It will be much more difficult for the French nation to exonerate itself from the approbium incurred by these transactions, than from any that the disgrace formerly occasioned by the management and abuses of the prisons and hospitals, of the Bastile, the Hotel-Dieu, the Salpetriere, and other institutions.

The most manifest proofs of love of liberty and patriotism, afforded as little protection to women as to men, against unmerited suspicions, or groundless accusations, and the consequent ignominous examinations, imprisonments, and executions. When we consider what the fair sex endured in France during the revolution, we almost forget the crimes of the women in the contemplation of their sufferings.

According to a credible eye-witness of the events of that period, the Jacobins and all the assassins belonging to them vented their sanguinary fury chiefly upon women, and particularly the most beautiful of the sex.* The journals of the tribunals in every part of the kingdom, prove, that a far greater proportion of women was executed than of men.

The sanguinary judges so far from paying the least regard to the delicacy, the character, and the modesty of the fair sex, endeavoured to render their judicial examinations still more painful than imprisonment and execution, and to murder the virtue, the reputation and the sensibility of women, before they took away their lives. Many, if not the majority, of the women who were brought before those tribunals, were treated no better than Madame Roland and the queen. When the former refused to give information of the place where her husband was concealed, the public accuser flew into a passion, and exclaimed that nothing could be done with such a *Bavarde*.† This rudeness shock-

* *Bemerkungen*, &c. p. 243, 244.

† *Appel de Madame Roland*, II. p 90.

ed her feelings far less than many of the questions which were intended to cast a stigma upon her character.* Madame Roland, notwithstanding all her firmness, could not refrain from shedding tears of indignation, when she found that attempts were made to destroy her reputation. At the trial of the queen, the miscreants carried their brutal indecency so far, that the inveterate hatred against her was suddenly converted into compassion, and even the fear of death which otherwise closed every heart, and paralysed every tongue, could not restrain the assembly from loudly expressing their sympathy and indignation. Herbert asked the queen whether she could deny having had a criminal connection with her son, a boy twelve years of age? Maria Antoinette without changing a feature, exclaimed—"Mothers, women of France, who are here present, to your feelings I appeal!—Can you hear such an accusation and not shudder with horror?" These words she uttered with such dignified energy, that all the spectators shed tears, and many of them exclaimed—"Unfortunate Antoinette!" When this scene was reported to Robespierre, he

* *Appel de Madame Roland*, II. p. 101.

was so struck with terror and vexation, that he dropped a plate which he happened to have in his hand at the time, and broke out into the most vehement execrations against Herbert, for affording the queen the triumph of exciting compassion.*

During the reign of terror, the prisons, and the scenes that were acted in them, claim our particular attention. "What a spectacle," says De la Croix,† "does a republic present, in which the principal edifices are scarcely sufficient to contain all the prisoners collected from the towns and provinces; where the nobleman and the peasant, the mechanic and the man of letters, are crowded together, indiscriminately as in one common grave; where the persons who arrests and guards another, is in dread of being himself arrested and guarded; where persons act the part of informers, in order to anticipate other informers; where each suspects and watches the other; where the master is distrustful of his servants; where the man of property lives in continual alarm, when at home is afraid to go abroad, and when abroad fears to return to his habi-

* *Bemerkungen*, &c. p. 269. † *Ibid.* p. 54. 150.

tation; where the mother, the wife, start at the slightest noise, fearful lest it is a person come to arrest the husband or the son; where a man dares not invite his friend to his table, or speak his sentiments to him; where the most natural emotions are regarded as crimes; where cautious prudence suppresses every expression of the affections of the mind; where the prisoner has to dread both the tribunal that punishes him, not for disobeying the existing laws, but for not having anticipated them, and also the insurrections of the mob and the agents of villainy! In what century, and in what reign have persons been so terrific as at the present moment, when horrors of every kind encompass the accused—when he can no longer trust to the law—when he sees his executioners in his judges—where he suffers so much oppression and cruelty in secret, that he cannot forbear bidding defiance to the scaffold, and looking forward to death as the most desirable termination of his miseries! Was it necessary to destroy the Bastile, and break all the chains of despotism, in order to forge still heavier fetters? Who does not feel his heart overwhelmed with melancholy,

when he passes those retreats which seem to have been wrested from superstition only, to be converted into the abodes of torment, and to immure the tenderness of youth, the delicacy of sex and the imbecility of age; where innocence and criminality are coupled together; where purity breathes the contagious atmosphere of abandoned licentiousness; where gross ignorance offends good taste, and fatigues learning; where all ages and classes are indiscriminately subjected to the brutal rapacity of an unfeeling gaoler, who is equally callous to the tears of weakness, and the firmness of fortitude."

Persons guilty of atrocious crimes or the greatest vices constituted but the smallest proportion of the prisoners during the reign of terror. When people of this description happened to be imprisoned, they were in general soon able to procure either their liberty, or at least indulgences, by bribing or gratifying the appetites of their gaolers and keepers.*

* "On verroit les filles de joie, coupables de quelque grand délit, obtenir leur liberté sans jugement, par le soin de l'administrateur, qui va coucher avec elle le jour de la sortie; les assassins assez riches pour payer du fruit de leurs vols, un défenseur officieux, l'interesser de manière à ce, qu'il

As long as vice and guilt presided at the helm of the state and in the courts of justice, in the clubs, or in the *comités de surveillance*, so long innocence and virtue, talents and merit, were confined to the public prisons. In many of the gaols, the noisomeness and filth of the narrow, pestilential cells in which the prisoners were immured; the scantiness and disgusting quality of the provisions; the want of advice and medicines in cases of sickness, and the cruel severity of the gaolers, produced such a desperation, such a desire of death among the prisoners, that they did every thing in their power to accelerate their execution, and on the road to the scaffold sung jovial and republican songs.* Other prisons,

anéantisse les pièces de conviction, procure l'impunité; les voleurs de profession conserver leurs intrigues, communiquer entr'eux, et au-dehors, et dérober encore du fond de la prison, en partageant avec un serviteur du lieu, ou le gendarme, qui paroît le garder."—*Bemerkungen*, p. 52.

* See *Tableau des Prisons*, p. 133. 180. "La mort était regardée comme un bienfait dans ces demeures infernales, et souvent les prisonniers sortaient gaiement du tribunal, et chantaient en allant a l'échaffaud:—

"Allons, enfans de la patrie;
"Le jour de gloire est arrivé."

One source of misery to the prisoners consisted in the frequent removals from one prison to another. A young woman, far advanced in pregnancy, was suddenly awaked one morning, at four o'clock, in order to be taken to another prison. The alarm which this occasioned brought on the pains of labour, and she begged for a respite of a few days.

where the keepers were either more humane or more easily bribed, might have been the abodes of joy, as they were theatres for the exercise of virtue,* if the frequent removals of the victims, and the painful separations of the persons who had become strongly attached to each other, had not so often thrown a gloom over the minds of the prisoners. The idea of near and inevitable death produced in most of the prisoners of both sexes a tranquil resignation to their fate, and a contempt of life, which in the eyes of most of them had lost the chief part of its value, in consequence of the loss of their property, privileges, and honours, the execution or flight of their dearest friends and relatives, and the increasing distraction of the country. When once the fear of death was surmounted, the heart again became susceptible of the impressions of pleasure; and a determination was even formed to make the most of the short remainder of life. In

Her request was denied, under pretence that she only feigned to be in labour, and she was obliged to go with the rest. But scarcely had she with much difficulty reached the gate of the prison, when her pains increased, and she was delivered of a child, in the presence of the gaolers and of her fellow prisoners.—*Ibid.* p. 178.

* Respecting the virtues which were exercised in the prisons, see *Tableau des Prisons*, 49. *De la Croix*, p. 57.

this frame of mind, each exerted every talent he possessed, to amuse himself and his companions. Some wrote poems, and read them to their fellow-prisoners; others set them to music; concerts and assemblies were given; they jested, they laughed, or they wept together; they condoled with those who were in sorrow, relieved such as were distressed, became more and more strongly attached to each other by the bonds of mutual affection;* and many who were set at liberty found afterwards an insipidity in life, which excited a desire to be again in prison, or rather to enjoy again those heartfelt gratifications which the prison had afforded them †. Many persons of both sexes, by way of making the most of the short time they had to live, grasped at every enjoyment within their reach, and even abandoned themselves to the utmost excesses in the pleasures of the table and amor-

* See various passages in the *Tableau des Prisons*, and *De la Croix*, p. 212, 213.

† "Vous dirai-je? Il m'arrive quelquefois de regretter les momens, où mes compagnes d'infortune se réunissoient autoir de moi; où nous pleurions et rions ensemble; où nous charmions nos ennuis, nos degoûts par des chansons, par nos yeux de couvent; où nous partagions les friandises, qui échappoient à l'avidité de notre geolier; où nous lui fassions des niches, comme des enfans qui trompent une bonne sévere; ou une égalité de malheurs et d'oppression rendoit chacun de nous sensible aux peines et aux terreurs des autres."—*De la Croix*, p. 212, 213.

ous indulgence, as the best sources of consolation for persons doomed to die.* Among the highest pleasures enjoyed in these prisons were the clandestine meetings of lovers; or, if these could not be obtained, the private conversations, carried on more frequently by signs and gestures than by words, at the grates of the dungeons. "Many wives and mothers took their seats before sun-rise, upon stones in the vicinity of the prisons, keeping their eyes fixed upon the iron grates, through which they hoped soon to behold the objects of their affection. Their feelings on these occasions seemed to exalt them above humanity. Night overtook them, while indulging in their melancholy pleasure; and they retired to their homes, cheered only by the hope of passing the next day in the same manner. Never since the sun began his course did his beams illumine a sorrow so respectable. Where now rests thy head, tender mother of Herault de Séchelles, since

† "La bonne chère lui parût pour un prisonnier, attendu par le tribunal revolutionnaire, une distraction plus certaine que tous les écrits de la philosophie; il eut, dit-on, des liaisons amœureuses avec des femmes connues jusqu'alors par l'extrême réserve de leur conduite, que la seule prison peut-être avait rendues galantes, et que la ressemblance d'infortune reunissoit dans la même projet de consolation." *Vie de Hoche*, I. p. 186.

thine eyes, exhausted with tears, can no longer discover the darling of thy old age? Many women, when they heard sentence of death pronounced upon their husbands, endeavoured to provoke the sanguinary judges, by uttering anti-republican wishes or execrations, to condemn them to the same fate; and those ruffians, instead of feeling compassion for the most honourable of all errors, fulfilled by a precipitate sentence of death, the desires of conjugal affection.* Such instances of female virtue were requisite to mitigate the abhorrence that could not fail to be excited by the conduct of a gang of blood-thirsty women who constantly besieged the gates of the Conciergerie, calling out to the prisoners, as they were led to trial, the dreadful words, *A la guillotine!* and announcing, with the most horrible execrations, the fate that awaited them.†

As such arrests, such imprisonments, such tribunals, and such executions as

* *De la Croix*, p. 380, 381.

† Les portes du Plessis n'etaient point assiegées, comme celles de la Conciergerie, par une horde sanguinaire de femmes, qui faisaient retentir aux oreilles des malheureux détenus, le cri horrible à la guillotine, et leur annonçaient, en vomissant les plus sales injures, le triste sort, qui les attendait." *Tableaux des Prisons*, p. 191.

France exhibited during the reign of terror, had never been witnessed in any civilized nation of modern times: so also the undaunted fortitude and the cheerful alacrity with which thousands of every age, rank, and sex, met death during this period, were equally without example. This preternatural fortitude in death was in but few the effect of true strength of mind, or extraordinary elevation of sentiment. The greater number died like heroes, in order that they might equal, if not surpass, those examples which excited universal admiration.* It did not appear surprizing that military men, magistrates, and courtiers should meet death with fortitude: but it justly excited astonishment, that mere striplings, and even females, some of them quite young girls, some newly-married women, who had but just begun to enjoy the pleasures of life, should ascend the scaffold with the same tranquil forti-

* "Enfin la mode élève le courage des malheureuses victimes de la tirannie dans leurs derniers momens; elles subissent leur sort affreux, avec une intrepide sécurité, sans être animées par aucun des motifs sublimes, qui font disparôitre les horreurs de la mort. L'exemple, c'est à dire, la mode de mourir courageusement leur tient lieu et de la religion consolante, et de cette ivresse, que produisent les sentimens profonds."—*Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 200. See *De la Croix*, p. 73. 100. 101.

tude.* The only woman who disgraced her sex by her pusillanimous conduct at her execution, was the countess du Barry.† The more eager the sanguinary mob seemed to be to discover symptoms of sorrow or repentance in the features of the persons condemned to die, the more their victims exerted themselves to exhibit every appearance of the most perfect composure, or even gaiety.‡ Some observed a contemptuous silence: others provoked the gazing crowd, by menacing gestures or invectives: some practised the steps of a dance, or sung an opera-air, while they saw their nearest relatives and friends executed, and stood at the foot of the altar, on which

* .... "Mais j'ai souvent admiré la contenance ferme et courageuse de plusieurs jeunes épouses, qui avoient eu tant de raisons pour chérir la vie, et qui, aprés en avoir a peine goûté les premices, se trouvoient tout-à-coup parvenues à son terme. .... Toutes les femmes qui périssent victimes de leurs opinions, conservent après leur jugement, une tranquillité, qu'on croyoit au-dessus de leur sexe. ..... Ce qu'il y a de plus étonnant dans cette dernière lutte du parti subjugué contre la multitude triomphante, c'est la vue de la beauté, de la jeunesse, et presque de l'enfance, disputant de fermeté avec les hommes les plus exercés à braver la mort."—*De la Croix, ibid.*

† "Si l'on excepte cette trop fameuse courtisanne, dont l'ame étoit amollie pas les voluptés."—*Ibid.*

‡ "Cette foule, qui se montre si ardente d'exécutions, cherche sur les visages des condamnes les traits de la douleur et du repentir; mais ceux-ci affectent une joie, qui ne peut exister au fond de leur cœur."—*Ibid.*

they were themselves in a few moments to be sacrificed. This last-mentioned bravado is not to be accounted for, except by the supposition of a degree of insanity.*

The persons who principally contributed to introduce the fashion of going to the guillotine with the same cheerfulness as to an opera, were the unfortunate king, the still more unfortunate queen, and the fair fanatic Charlotte Corday. The enemies of Louis XVI. had so completely annihilated all remembrance of his virtues, all commiseration for his fate, in the greater part of the nation, that, even after his death, the injustice with which his trial had been conducted, and the cruelty with which his sentence had been executed, were very rarely mentioned. But the manner in which the king behaved during his last moments was a very frequent topic of conversation. Every word which he had uttered was repeated—every motion of his body, every feature of his face described, with the utmost satisfaction; and the result of the discussion was always the same—that the king had died nobly. The calm resig-

* *De la Croix*, and also *Bemerkungen*, &c.

nation with which he met his fate excited such admiration that every one was ambitious to die like him.

With similar fortitude Charlotte Corday, who had stabbed Marat, ascended the scaffold; beautiful as an angel, and adorned like a bride. The example of this amiable female fired the imaginations of all young men and women of enthusiastic minds throughout France. From the day of her death bonnets, sashes, tippets *à la Corday* became so much the rage among the women of France that the national convention found it necessary to prohibit these new anti-jacobin fashions under severe penalties.*

As the sufferings of the queen exceeded beyond comparison those of any other victim of the revolution, so her fortitude during the latter period of her life and at her death surpassed every other example of heroism. One of the least of her afflictions was the dread of a violent death, which probably never quitted her from the 18th of July, 1789. Infinitely more tormenting to her ardent, proud and imperious mind must have been the continually increasing ascendancy of popular

* *Bemerkungen*, p. 251.

factions and popular demagogues who hated her; the gradual evanescence of the last remains of power and greatness which she imagined herself born to possess by indefeasible right; her ineffectual endeavours, by assumed condescension, to regain the affections of the people; the cruel disappointment of her hopes of being reinstated in her suspended rights and dignity, or of escaping from her enemies by flight; the removal, or murder, of the persons most dear to her, especially her inhuman separation from her husband and children; finally, the innumerable insults to which she was exposed on each of the decisive days of the revolution, and especially during her imprisonment, at her trial, and on her way to the place of execution. If we consider the anguish of soul which such an accumulation of tortures must have produced; the inconveniencies which she suffered in a dreary and noisome prison, seem scarcely to add any thing to the account. During her confinement of seventeen weeks in the Conciergerie, with a mere mattress of straw to lie upon, Marie Antoinette maintained the same dignity of deportment as in the splendid apartments of Trianon; and she never

afforded her tormentors the gratification of seeing her sink pusillanimously under her sufferings. The greatest triumph which she gained over her enemies was at her trial, by which they hoped most completely to humble her. She answered all interrogatories with such composure, such precision, and conscious dignity, as confounded her nefarious accusers and judges, and drew from all the rest of the assembly tears of the highest admiration and warmest sympathy.* On the day of her death there were only two moments in which she yielded to her emotions, and even then without in the least degrading herself. She had expected that she should be conveyed to the place of execution as the king had been, in a coach. When, therefore, she saw the cart in which she was to be conveyed, she blushed, and wiped her eyes. But

* "L'ordre des ses réponses, la fermeté de sa voix; le sang froid, qu'elle conservoit devant ses accusateurs, annonçoient un caractère plus calme qu'on ne l'avoit cru. On voyoit, à l'art qu'elle mettoit à se justifier, que ses longues infortunes ne l'avoient pas rassassiée de la vie, qu'elle y tenoit encore; elle étoit mère de deux enfans! Je ne partageois pas sa confiance, je lisois dans les yeux des ses juges sa triste destinée. Lorsqu'on lui annonça qu'elle alloit cesser d'être, j'ai baissé mes regards, et je me suis figuré la pale flambeau de la nuit obscurci d'un nuage et replongé dans les tenèbres."—*De la Croix*, p. 72.

when seated in this vehicle, she looked round her with as much apparent cheerfulness as if she had been on a party of pleasure. It was not till the stones that were thrown flew too thick about her, that she held her handkerchief to her face. When she ascended the guillotine, her aspect struck such awe into the executioner that he involuntarily uncovered himself and made her a profound obeisance. By the same commanding aspect she caused the invectives and execrations which till then had continued without intermission, to cease for a short time. To atone for the crime of his involuntary respect, the executioner tore off the queen's neck-handkerchief with brutal violence. The miscreant rabble raised a loud shout of exultation. Neither the brutality of the executioner nor the ferocity of the sanguinary mob produced the slightest alteration in the queen's features. But when the ruffian proceeded to pull off her cap, and cut off her hair, turned grey with affliction, which he trampled under his feet, her anguish became too strong for nature to endure, and the queen began to weep. The tears of the illustrious sufferer pro-

duced a solemn silence, which continued till the sufferings of the imperial victim were consummated.

The total overthrow of the ancient, and the establishment of a new system of government, the disappearance of the court and every thing connected with it; the emigration, execution, or impoverishment of the principal landed proprietors and other persons of rank or opulence, whose societies were the patterns of politeness; the important events of the revolution, and particularly the great calamities and crimes to which it gave occasion, produced such a change in the way of thinking and the mutual relations of both sexes, as was very conspicuous from the beginning, and must be still more striking hereafter.

"Politeness and good manners," observes Moore,* writing during the period of the monarchy, "form a much more remarkable and distinguishing feature in the French national character, than the vivacity, impetuosity, and fickleness, for which the ancient as well as the modern inhabitants of this country have been noted. This politeness, which in every

* *Moore's View of Society and Manners in France*, &c. I. p. 29.

other country is confined to people of a certain rank in life, pervades here every situation and profession. The man in power is courteous to his dependent, the prosperous to the unfortunate, the very beggar who solicits charity, does it *en homme comme il faut:* and if his request be not granted, he is sure, at least, that it will be refused with an appearance of humanity, and not with harshness or insult. A stranger quite new and unversed in their language, whose accent is uncouth and ridiculous in the ears of the French, and who can scarcely open his mouth without making a blunder in grammar or idiom, is heard with the most serious attention, and never laughed at, even when he utters the oddest solecism or equivocal expression. The most daring deviation from fashion, in the important article of dress, cannot make them forget the laws of good breeding. When a person appears in the public walks, in clothes made against every law of the mode, they do not gaze or sneer at him; they allow him first to pass, as it were, unobserved, and do not till then turn round to indulge the curiosity which his uncommon figure may have excited. This instance of delicacy is often observed

in the lowest of the vulgar. There is not such a difference between the manners and behaviour of the people of the first rank, and those of the middle and lower ranks in France as in other countries. Players, therefore, who wish to catch the manners of people of high rank and fashion do not undertake so great a task in France as in England" (or Germany).*

The French were undeniably indebted for their high character for politeness to the court of their kings, as the manners of the court were first imitated in the capital, and thence transmitted to the provinces. It is said that all the emigrants who returned to France, and after the 18th Fructidor, were obliged again to leave their country, were not so much struck by any alteration that had taken place during their absence as by the gloomy solemnity, the abruptness bordering on rudeness, which they remarked in the manners and language of all classes of people, and particularly in the republican army. If the republican form of government should continue in France, the last remains of the ancient politeness

* *Moore's View*, &c. I. p. 144.

will gradually disappear, even though the jacobinical use of the second person singular instead of the second person plural, in common conversation should cease, the word *citoyen* again give place to *monsieur*, and the two higher councils exhibit no more such instances of brutal rudeness and violence as have for years disgraced the representatives of the people in the eyes of every civilized nation in Europe.

A peculiar branch of French politeness was gallantry to the fair sex, taking the word gallantry in its best signification. This gallantry displayed itself more among this than among any other civilized people, in an unremitting attention to the wishes and trifling conveniences of all women without exception; in a constant endeavour to please them by entertaining discourse, well directed flattery, and petty services; and finally, in a genteel neatness of dress calculated to please the taste of the ladies. But as soon as the desire of reforming the abuses of the ancient constitution, or even establishing a new one, inflamed the minds of the whole nation, and after the former system of government had been overthrown, one dreadful or glorious event

followed another, the men lost the inclination to devote their time and attention, as before, to the service of the fair sex. Republican enthusiasm generated sans-culotism, and in the room of courtly gallantry a brutal and disgusting rudeness of manners came into vogue. Scarcely had the throne of Louis XVI. been subverted when very few traces of the former elegance in dress were to be found among the women, and none at all among the men.* From the 31st of May, 1793, which gave the last blow to the Gironde, the manners and dress of sailors or porters became the prevailing fashion. Even the representatives of the nation appeared in red caps, short jackets, and trowsers. They swore and gesticulated like the lowest of the people under the influence of intoxication.† Full two years after the sans-culotte government had been overthrown, the sans-culotte manners and dress were still retained. When M. Meyer was in Paris, in the

* "The women still display fancy and some degree of elegance in their dress; but the men are universally dressed with the utmost simplicity."—*Moore's Journal*, II. p. 134.

† "Que diroit-il, bon Dieu, s'il voyoit les députés depuis le 31 Mai, vêtus comme les gens du port, en pantalon, veste, et bonnet, la chemise ouverte sur la portrine, jurant et gesticulant en sansculottes ivres."—*Madame Roland*, II. p. 30.

year 1796, the *citoyennes dansantes* at the most splendid assemblies of the capital, humbly requested the *citoyens dansans* not to appear any more at balls in short jackets and trowsers, and with their hats on, and particularly not to dance in boots. Upon this request they ceased to come booted, but they would not leave off their trowsers.* Should the present government, by gaining the universal confidence of the people, acquire stability, and the whole nation obtain tranquillity and general prosperity, then, no doubt, decency of behaviour towards the fair sex, and propriety in dress will return. But banished politeness and gallantry can never revisit France as long as the republican form of government, which is so hostile to them, exists. Only such a court as that of France once was can form a centre of attraction for people of fortune, taste, and leisure, and only among persons of this description can that constant community take place, by which the politeness and gallantry of former times were produced. The tone of society in the houses and at the tables of the *parvenus riches* is as bad as could

* *Meyer's Fragmente*, I. p. 103.

be expected among such ignorant, arrogant, and unprincipled upstarts.

When once the licentiousness produced by the revolution shall entirely disappear, both sexes in France will probably gain more in virtue and morals than they have lost in elegance and agreeableness of manners. The women in particular, will become more feminine, as the men have become more manly, than they formerly were. Among the known effects of social intercourse carried to its greatest extent, that eloquence by which the French women were distinguished, accompanied with something of a masculine cast, observable even to their own countrymen, but chiefly to foreigners, was very conspicuous. Some travellers have remarked both these peculiarities in the French women, subsequent to the period of terror. Even those of the lower order still speak not only so much, but so well, that a foreigner, who should hear them without seeing them, might easily be induced to imagine that he overheard the conversation of ladies of the first distinction.* With all this eloquence the women of France want that

* *Bemerkungen*, p. 165.

easy affability, that delicate playfulness which distinguishes the German ladies. They either shew too much desire to please, or none at all.* A remnant of the former masculine manners of the French women was, the fashion for ladies to drive their own vehicles, which was prevalent a few years since, and perhaps may be so still. Young women, married and unmarried, were seen driving their cabriolets through the streets with the same rapidity and dexterity as the chariots of the great were formerly driven by their coachmen. Every unwomanly trait in the manners of the French females, and even their masculine eloquence, must disappear in proportion as they relinquish the habit of spending so much of their time in the company of strangers of the other sex, and confine themselves more to the society of their own families.

The disappearance of the court with

* *Bemerkungen*, p. 165. The author therefore thinks the German ladies the more attractive, the French the more beautiful. The latter opinion will appear to the German reader more strange than the former. Moore, speaking of the French women before the revolution, says—"A handsome French woman, besides the ease of her manner, has commonly a look of cheerfulness and great vivacity. She appears willing to be acquainted with you, and seems to expect that you will address her." *View of Society*, &c. II. p. 23.

all its amusements and its good and bad examples; the removal of the rich and dissipated courtiers, and of the dignified clergy, with their wealth and their arts of seduction; the discontinuance of the splendid assemblies, and continual attendance at court, by which both sexes were corrupted; the abolition of the cloisters, and the reduction to poverty of most of the proprietors of land, and other persons possessing large incomes, could not fail, in a short time, to produce an evident effect upon the mode of life and education of the fair sex. The ladies of the court and the capital, being formerly engaged in perpetual dissipation, sent their infants into the country to be suckled by healthy rustics. Since the revolution it has been much more common for mothers themselves to perform the duties of maternity than it was before; not because Rousseau and many eminent physicians have recommended it, but because most persons of the higher classes have lost the greater part of their property during the disorders of the country, and been reduced to the necessity of dispensing with a hired nurse. The younger daughters of families of distinction were formerly shut up in con-

vents. At present they are chiefly educated under the eye of the mother, as but few families are rich enough to defray the charges of expensive boarding-schools. Ladies of fortune and distinction, and even those that were merely in easy circumstances, formerly paid no attention to house-keeping; and needle-work they learned and practised rather as an amusement, than from economical motives. The total loss, or great diminution of their incomes, has compelled many ladies of the higher ranks to apply themselves to ornamental and other needle-work as a means of earning a subsistence. If the ladies of France have not yet become so industrious as those of Germany they are certainly more so than they formerly were, and they will become still more industrious and domestic when they shall have relinquished that unfeminine custom of attending popular assemblies, the courts of justice, and executions. The women of France are said at present to drink more, especially of spirituous liquors, than those of Germany.* If this be the case, we must consider the habit as one of the pernicious effects of the revolution.

* *Bemerkungen*, p. 150.

It has for several years past been asserted, that since the abolition of the dignified clergy and ecclesiastics in orders, the morals of the French women have undergone a great alteration for the better.* With this improved state of their morals I know not how to reconcile a kind of cicisbeism, which is represented to be so general among them as to give no offence.† If a *bon ami* be considered as an indispensable requisite for every lady, whether married or unmarried, a much greater latitude is allowed to both, particularly to the unmarried, than formerly. It is fortunate for the morals of the nation that divorces have become for several years past less frequent than during the period of terror. Had not the public opinion set bounds to the facility which the law gave to divorces, that cause would of itself have been sufficient totally to subvert the morals of the nation.

Even at the present day the effects of the revolution appear still more conspicuous in the dress of the French ladies than in their manners. The female peasantry still maintain their former

* *Bemerkungen*, p. 166. † *Ibid.*

reputation of dressing with greater neatness and elegance not only than the men, but than women of the same rank in most other countries of Europe;* whereas all travellers who have lately visited France agree that in the great towns the females of the higher classes dress with much less taste and elegance than they used to do.† As late as the year 1795, feathers were entirely excluded from female dress, and regular head-dresses, or *coeffures*, were very rare. The hair was either confined with a broad ribbon, or covered with the *bonnet rond*, of which there was a great variety of forms. Rich stuffs were scarcely ever seen, and ladies of the first distinction walked about in light clogs in wet weather. The fashions at present change much less frequently than they formerly did, as there are at present no such distinguished or admired leaders of the public taste as existed in the time of the court, or when the grand opera was at the height of its glory. If the dark

* "I do not know how it happens, but the female part of the French peasantry dress not only with neatness, but a kind of elegance; while the dress of the males is the most formal, clumsy, unbecoming thing in the world." *Moore's Journal*, I. p. 363.

† *Moore's Journal*, II. p. 134. *Bemerkungen*, &c. p. 164. *Meyer's Fragmente*, I. p. 101.

and light wigs, the exaggerated Grecian costume, and the indecent exposures of the person of some French women of fashion have met with imitation in Germany, it must have proceeded either from an affectation of republican principles or from some remains of the old prejudice, that all French fashions are becoming. It is generally omitted by dealers in those articles, that all the dresses at present imported from France are either destitute of taste or fantastical.

The decline of fashion in France, however, would afford little just cause of regret if only the genuine improvement of the nation were established upon a more solid basis and more widely extended. Almost all the old institutions for education and instruction have been destroyed, and the new ones, some of a very expensive nature in the capital excepted, have either not been completed, or have produced but very little effect. A great proportion of the rising generation has grown up amid the din of arms, with very little careful instruction. How should the minds of the female sex receive due cultivation when those of the men and youth are neglected? The most celebrated writers of the last reign are

already forgotten;* the classic productions of the ages of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. seem written for another nation;† and the period of the revolution has produced nothing to equal them. Even the numerous and enlightened societies in which the minds of the ladies of France formerly received the chief part of their improvement, exist no more. Under such circumstances, who can indulge any great hopes with respect, at least, to immediate futurity?

* Especially the abbé Raynal, and the author of the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*. *Du Gouvernement*, &c. p. 179, 180.

† *Spectateur pendant. la revolution*, p. 126, 127.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Influence of the French Court and French Manners on the other Courts and Nations of Europe, during the Reign of Louis XVI.

HAVING followed the most brilliant court of our division of the globe, for three centuries the model of all the other courts of Europe, till its final destruction, and the nation which it polished till the period of its great revolution, it is time to examine the effects produced by the imitation of this court, and of this nation during the reign of the late unfortunate Louis, in the other courts and among the other people of Europe.

French manners and customs, French fashions and way of living were as extensively diffused during the reign of Louis XVI. as under any preceding sovereign of France. Among the European countries which are called polished, Portugal was the only one that dur-

ing the latter years of the monarchy, adopted neither the manners nor the fashions of the French. In Spain and Italy, on the other hand, both made a greater progress during the last generation than they had done in the two foregoing centuries and a half. In Germany and the North of Europe, the partiality for French fashions, manners, and language, still maintained the ascendancy; though in many parts the inhabitants began to imitate the English. The latter renounced every thing that they had borrowed from the French, at the very time when the French were seized with the Anglomania.

The Portuguese have hitherto adopted foreign manners in a less degree than foreign improvements in art or science. When we therefore peruse the most recent descriptions of the Portuguese court, of the way of living, occupations and pleasures of people of rank and fortune, finally of the mutual relations of both sexes, and of the different classes, we might be tempted to imagine that we were reading not of an European but of an oriental nation. The Portuguese are still almost as jealous, and their women nearly as much confined as they were

during the dominion of the Moors.* The wives of people of rank and fortune seldom go abroad, and when they do, they are always attended by a retinue of female domestics, who walk behind their mistresses two by two. Portuguese ladies of distinction ask or take permission to leave their houses, merely for the purpose of visiting their friends, going to church or some other sacred place: but never to take the air in the public walks, or to display their charms to the eager gaze of the multitude. † Both sexes find very little pleasure in mixed societies, and though they meet from time to time at assemblies, these are even more insipid and more tedious than the Italian *conversazioni*.‡ The highest, and almost, the only pleasure the Portuguese women enjoy during the day, is to recline in listless indolence either in an arm-chair or upon a sopha, or to sit at their windows to look at the passengers and be looked at by them. The window may justly be called the throne of the Portuguese fair, where on festivals and religious processions they appear in all their glory. For the last week, and par-

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 77—79. *Dumouriez*, p. 161.
† *Tableau*, p. 51. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 71.

ticularly the last three days of the carnival, the windows are never free from women in their best attire, who, being provided with squirts and vessels of different kinds, sprinkle and pelt the passengers with all sorts of matters solid and fluid, pure and impure. On one of these occasions, a lady of quality distinguished herself above the rest by the use of a squirt, which discharged a stream strong enough to knock down the most robust man.*

Scarcely any other traces of foreign fashions and customs were to be discovered, than that the women of rank and fortune dressed in the French style, and that the sex in general was gradually relinquishing the practice of sitting cross-legged.†

In no other large country of Europe have the French fashions and manners within the last thirty years, gained so complete an ascendancy as in Spain. It is not much longer since a dangerous insurrection was occasioned at Madrid, by the attempt of the marchese Squillace, to abolish by force, the long cloaks, and the broad-brimmed, low-crowned hats. ‡

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 83, 84. † *Ibid.* p. 80, 89.
‡ *Bourgoing*, II. p. 296.

The minister fled from the metropolis. The whole court trembled at the fury of the populace, who took under their protection the masks of assassins and other malefactors. From that time the example of the court and of people of rank, have done more than a minister aided by the royal authority was capable of effecting. Broad-brimmed hats have totally disappeared in the capital. Among the middling classes, the *capa's* or cloaks of the men, and the *mantilla's,* or long veils of the women are now used only as a gallant *negligée;* and no foreigner can put on either the one or the other in such various and elegant ways as the Spaniards of both sexes.* Spaniards of respectability, even though they may retain the mantle, yet wear clothes in the French fashion underneath them. French *marchandes des modes* are employed by the wives and daughters of the Spaniards,† and at the same time bring up young females to the profession, who, it is hoped, will soon enable their country-women

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 298, 330. *Townsend*, I. 335. *Dumoureiz*, 168. The most recent accounts are to be found in *Fischer*.

† The Spanish ladies of the present day never paint. *Bourgoing*, II. 309. In former times they painted to an immoderate degree.

to dispense with the assistance of foreigners in that line. The changes which have taken place, during the above-mentioned period in the domestic and social relations of the Spaniards, are much greater than the revolutions in the fashions.*. In no country have the women more liberty and no where are husbands less jealous than in Spain.† Cicisbeism is as common there as in Italy,‡ and the *cortejos* of Spain are thought still less disinterested than the Italian cicisbeos.§ If the Spaniards of either sex require inviolable constancy, it is not of their wives and husbands, but of their mistresses and gallants of whose exclusive love alone they

* Townsend was informed in Spain that Charles III. and the Italians who accompanied him from Naples, introduced cicisbeism, and thus occasioned the consequent changes in manners. It is more probable that the reign of Charles III. was only the epoch, than that it was the cause of those changes. But if even the Spanish cicisbeism were only an imitation of the Italian, it must not be forgotten that the latter was a production of French manners.

† *Bourgoing*, II. p. 307. "In no country of Europe are there fewer jealous husbands. The women who were formerly concealed from public view, of whom it was scarcely possible to obtain a glimpse between the interstices of those windows, which doubtless owe their name to that vile sentiment which invented them—the women now enjoy perfect liberty." See also *Townsend*, II. p. 142, &c.

‡ *Townsend*, II. p. 150.

§ *Bourgoing*, II. p. 310. "Those happy mortals whom the Spanish women condescend to make their slaves, and who are called cortejos, are less disinterested, but not less attentive than the cicisbeos of Italy."

are jealous. The men still have the character of being more passionate and more constant in love than other Europeans, and the women of being even still more ardent and more faithful than their countrymen. The Spanish ladies, therefore, are miserable when their cortejos are out of their sight.* Let a female be well or ill, at home or abroad, her cortejo must always attend her like her guardian angel. In her apartment he is always at her side. If she is at an assembly, a chair is always left by her unoccupied for her cortejo. When she goes abroad she takes hold of his arm. If she dances, she first dances with him, or if it is with a stranger, she evidently shews that she receives no pleasure from that amusement with any other partner than her gallant.† The more ardent is the passion of the Spaniards of both sexes, so much the more jealous and vigilant. In great companies the cortejo must converse with no lady but his mistress; and if a female is addressed in the pre-

* *Townsend*, II. p. 144. They shut themselves up for weeks together when their admirers are obliged to take a journey.

† *Ibid.*—"But with the stranger she evidently shews not indifference but disgust, and seems to look upon her partner with disdain."

sence of her cortejo, she soon evinces a manifest uneasiness arising solely from the fear of offending her lover. When a cortejo thinks he has reason to be offended, not content with reproaching his mistress in the strongest terms, he even vents his indignation in acts of the grossest violence. Thus, not long before Townsend's arrival at Madrid, an officer, not of very high rank, dragged one of the first duchesses of the court, by the hair of her head, about her own apartment, because she had excited his jealousy. It is still more frequently the case that the ladies attack their imprudent or suspected cortejos like tigresses, and leave abundant marks of their talons upon their faces.* With these sentiments nothing is more common in Spain than to see these connections continue for life, or expire merely of old age.† Inconstancy is still in some measure reckoned disgraceful in Spain;‡ and though a female might be disposed to brave the public opinion, yet it is not easy to disengage herself from her cortejo, if he be only a man of true

* *Townsend*, II. p. 147.

† *Bourgoing*, II. 311. "Et j'ai vu dans ces pays des passions ardentes, plus d'une amour mourir de veillesse."

‡ *Townsend*, II. p. 145.

courage. A lover of this description will not resign the possession of his mistress till he is compelled sword in hand; and hence a mortal combat is the inevitable prelude by which alone a new and favoured cortejo can attain the object of his wishes.* Fortunately for the friends of innovations, all cortejos are not equally tenacious of the rights which they have once acquired. Of late years the number of Spanish ladies who have discarded their lovers, when the latter ceased to please them, and filled the vacant places with others, has gradually increased.† The ancient respect for constancy is nevertheless still so predominant, that ladies of the highest rank, when they change too often, incur universal contempt, and are at length at a loss to find a cortejo.

The characteristic fidelity and constancy of the Spaniards of both sexes in love, is the principal reason that social amusements in Spain give less pleasure to foreigners than those of other coun-

* *Townsend*, II. p. 145.

† Townsend would almost appear to contradict himself when he observes, that "it is reckoned disgraceful to be fickle; yet innumerable instances are seen of ladies who often change their lovers." *Ibid.*

tries;* and that the French gallantry which is not confined to one beloved object, but embraces the whole sex, has not hitherto found access in Spain.†

The easy disposition of Spanish husbands, and the liberty enjoyed by Spanish wives, cannot fail to excite the greater astonishment, as all the kings from Philip V. have been most scrupulous observers of conjugal fidelity, and have not only endeavoured to prevent all scandalous amours, but likewise punished them with equal severity.‡ In former ages opulent courtezans were very common in Spain, especially in the capital. The rigid chastity of the sovereigns has caused these syrens, so dangerous to public morals, entirely to disappear.§ Under

* *Townsend*, II. p. 146. "Hence they are constantly engaged in watching each other's looks, and for want of confidence renounce in a great measure the charms of social intercourse."

† *Bourgoing*, II. 327. "The women there are beloved, nay even adored as in other countries; but when they do not excite very strong sentiments, they are not paid those attentions which our urbanity lavishes indiscriminately on all the individuals of that lovely sex."

‡ Bourgoing himself cannot forbear commending the good effects of the devotion of the Spanish kings, by which they have been withheld from the usual irregularities of princes. "Elle le mit," says that writer, "à l'abri des desordres des mocurs, et elle explique le rare phénomène d'une succession de plusieurs souverains sans maitresses."

§ *Bourgoing*, II. p. 315. "On chercherait vemement une de ces courtisanes, qui, autré part, etalent effrontement le somptueux salaire de leur lubricité."

the kings of the house of Bourbon, ladies of the highest distinction durst not manifest too great a resemblance to courtezans. A disgraceful expulsion from the court and capital would have been the mildest punishment for such a violation of public decorum.

Philip V. interdicted public balls and masquerades, and this prohibition has remained in full force till the present time.* So much the more frequent are private balls, private concerts, and assemblies, which the Spaniards at Madrid, and in the great commercial cities, denominated *tertullas*.† The principal distinction between the Spanish assemblies and those of other countries, is that the former are not mixed societies. As fond as the Spanish women are of the company of men, so little do they care for the society of persons of their own sex. Hence it is not uncommon to find at the Spanish *tertullas* no other lady but the mistress of the house, in the midst of a larger or smaller circle of men. They go to cards or converse, and in the mean time refreshments are handed round. In some of the great houses the assemblies are followed

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 323.
† *Ibid.* p. 323—9. III. 161. *Townsend*, II. 142.

by suppers, to which none but the most intimate friends and acquaintances are invited. At grand *refrescos*, given at weddings or other family occasions, the company is mixed.

At these refrescos the ladies assemble in one room and the gentlemen in another. The two parties do not unite till the refresco, or the refreshments themselves are brought in. These refreshments consist of glasses of water in which the company dip biscuits, chocolate, jellies, sweet-meats, and confectionary of every kind. Both men and women take so much of every thing that is offered them, that strangers cannot suppress their astonishment at the appetite of a people celebrated for their moderation. The ancient practice of carrying sweet-meats and confectionary away with them still continues.*

Besides the custom just mentioned, many other relics of ancient manners and usages are still to be seen even among the higher classes. The Spanish women always were and still are much more free in their language, and bolder in their address than the females of other polished

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 323.

nations of Europe.* Notwithstanding this want of delicacy the women of Spain will not permit many familiarities or caresses, and marks of attention, which are thought perfectly innocent among people less immodest and less corrupt. A Spanish lady would not allow, in the presence of others, the chastest kiss of friendship, or the coldest salute of politeness. Kisses are, therefore, entirely banished from the Spanish theatre. On account of the aversion to this mode of salutation, the translator of a French *operette*, entitled *le Tonnelier*, instead of making the hero of the piece kiss his mistress, has represented the latter picking the vermin from her gallant, because this is a service which lovers of the lower classes in Spain very commonly render one another. In the year 1786, Townsend himself saw a merchant smoke a segar, and then present it to a countess. The lady took it with an obeisance, smoaked it half out, then returned it to the owner, and after an interval of some minutes, puffed out a thick cloud of tobacco-smoke, after she had first suffered it to circulate completely through her lungs.†

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 313—317. *Townsend*, II. p. 44.
† *Townsend*, II. p. 45.

In the seventeenth century one of the strongest proofs that Spanish lovers could give of their gallantry was to scourge themselves till they bled, and even to make their blood fly upon their mistresses. These flagellations are now strictly prohibited in most of the great cities.* Even in places where they have not been expressly forbidden, they are so rare, that Bourgoing never saw an instance of the kind. He was informed, however, by an acquaintance, that a few years before, the following circumstance occurred in a small town of Estremadura. A handsome young woman dressed herself on Good-Friday in her best attire. The stranger having enquired her reason for so doing, she replied, that he would soon see. She then went to the window which was open, and waited with evident impatience for a number of flagellants. When they came opposite the fair female they began to scourge themselves most unmercifully, and the white dress of the lady was in a few moments besprinkled all over with blood. Bourgoing and his friend concluded that the lover of the lady was one of these flagel-

* *Townsend*, II. p. 111.

lants, and that he had united gallantry with devotion; a sure sign that amorous flagellations are drawing very near to their final end.*

The more unrestrained commerce of the sexes has necessarily produced a total alteration in the ancient etiquette of the Spanish court. The grandees alone, who are seldom or never appointed to high offices, for which indeed they are unfit,† retain with their wives as much of the ancient etiquette as they can; and for this they are punished as formerly by an *ennui* insupportable to every other person.‡ Ladies of rank, who have no places at court, kiss the hands only of the queen, and the princess of Austrias: whereas all the ladies immediately belonging to the court, are obliged to pay the same mark of respect to all the persons of the royal family, not excepting the youngest infantas.§

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 288.

† *Townsend*, II. p. 247. "In Spain, on the contrary, in the higher ranks, all is torpid. Satisfied with hereditary wealth and honours, the grandees sink into mere sensualists, and are lost."

‡ *Bourgoing*, II. p. 274.

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 143. Bourgoing considers this custom very extraordinary, and makes this reflection on the occasion: "Ainsi le beau sexe est donc par-tout destiné à eprou-

Next to Spain, there is no other extensive country of Europe, in which, during the last generation, French fashions and French manners have become so prevalent as in Italy. The French fashions were more common at the courts than in the great commercial or provincial towns; and at courts themselves they did not change so often as in Paris, London, or the great capitals of Germany.* In most parts of Italy the women of every district dressed alike,† even in the latest times; and these uniform dresses were retained even by the ladies of Venice and Genoa. Foreign females of taste acknowledge that in no place does their sex spend less money, and less time upon dress and personal ornament, and yet appear to such advantage as at Venice;‡ and that no where do the wo-

ver des ontrages!" He might have spared himself this exclamation, had he known that the etiquette, which still prevails at the Spanish court, was formerly common at all the courts of Europe.

* *Piozzi*, I. 102. "Ladies of distinction bring with them when they marry, besides fortune, as many clothes as will last them seven years; for fashions do not change here (in Milan) as often as at London or Paris."

† *Ibid.* p. 1. 56. "Uniformity of almost any sort gives a certain pleasure to the eye; and it seems an invariable rule in these countries, that all the women of every district should dress just alike."

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 184, 5. This lady gives the best description of the dress of the Venetian females.

men disfigure themselves more than at Genoa, where their *meseros*, or cotton veils cover the head, neck, arms, and shape, and almost transform them into moving mummies.* The country-people in the vicinity of Florence dress with greater cleanliness and even elegance than those of any other part of Italy, or perhaps of all Europe.† This cleanliness of the Florentine peasantry is the more remarkable, as, in the rest of Italy, splendour and nastiness often go hand in hand, even among the higher classes,‡ and particular cleanliness in dress and lodging is deemed the most intolerable slavery.§

Cicisbeism in Italy was by no means of French origin. Nevertheless the turn which it took among the higher classes,‖ throughout all Italy, the corruption of

* *Archenholz*, IV. p. 179, 180.

† *Piozzi*, I. 305, 6. *Moore's View of Italy*, II. 356, 7.

‡ *Lettres de la Princesse de G——*, I. p. 112.

§ A nobleman, who had been in England, was once praising the cleanliness of the English, in a company at Milan. He affirmed that people of quality changed their linen every day; that the women every morning washed the space before their houses, &c. A lady of rank, who was present, exclaimed: *Che schiavitu mai! Ma naturalmente sara per c ommando del principe.—Piozzi*, I. 105.

‖ Among the lower classes there is no such thing.—*Moore*, II. p. 118.

morals which it produced, the compulsory separation of married people in company, and above all in public, which it occasioned, may justly be deemed effects of French manners.* Some of the cicisbeos are still, indeed, what they were originally intended to be, the faithful and unimpeachable attendants and guardians of the ladies, whom their husbands commit to their care.† It is not to be supposed that husbands in Italy should universally regard cicisbeism as a privileged adulterous connection. It is, however, but too clear, from the concurrent testimonies of travellers the most deserving of credit that the *cavalieri serventi* or cicisbeos in all the great cities of Italy, are much more rarely guardians of chastity appointed by the husbands, than favoured admirers chosen by the wives; that the ladies speak publicly of cicisbeism as of a second marriage, and think it sufficient if their husbands know that their wives gave birth to the children who bear their name;‡ that, on the death of cicisbeos

* *Moore*, II. 406—414.

† See the authorities already quoted, and also *Ramdohr's Venus Urania*, IV. 322, &c.

‡ *Brooke's Observations*, &c. p. 66.

husbands compel their wives to chuse fresh gallants, that they may themselves act the part of cicisbeos to other women;* that finally, husbands, who impose restaints on their wives, or treat them from just jealousy with severity, are abhorred as monsters, against whom the public in general takes a most decided part † Husbands who shew impatience, severity, or merely dissatisfaction, run the risk of being discarded by the fair whom they serve in the quality of cicisboes, as hard-hearted or dangerous men.‡

* *Brooke's Observations*, &c. p. 131.

† Respecting cicisbeism at Milan, see *Piozzi*, I. p. 101; at Venice *ib.* p. 181, 2. and *Lettres de la Princesse de G.*— I. 77—112; at Bologna, *Archenholz* IV. p. 107; at Genoa *ib.* p. 167, 198—200, and *Lettres sur quelques contrées de l'Europe*, I. p. 109; at Florence, Rome and Naples, *Archenholz*, V. p. 177. *Moore*, II. p. 389, 406, &c.; in Sicily, *Piozzi*, II. p. 50, 51. Unequal marriages incur great odium, and severe punishment in all Italy, but especially in Sicily. If a young lady of that island were to chuse for her husband a person inferior in rank to herself she would lose her fortune, and the lover would infallibly be assassinated. Such follies, as a gentleman observed to Mrs. Piozzi, are so much the more rare, "because if love be in the case, all personal attachment may be fully gratified, only let a woman be but once legally married to a man every way her equal."

‡ *Piozzi*, I. p. 104. "A woman here in every stage of life has really a degree of attention shewn her that is surprizing; if conjugal disputes arise in a family, so as to make them become what we call town-talk, the public voice is sure to run against the husband; if separation ensues, all possible countenance is given to the wife, while the gentleman is somewhat less willingly received; and all the stories of past disgusts are

No sooner had cicisbeism become a general practice than the consequence necessarily resulting from it was, that married people could not appear in public together, and this consequence was soon followed by another, that they durst not be seen together.* By virtue of this law of fashion, the wife belongs to her husband only during the night and at dinner. Excepting Milan,† where German sovereigns have introduced German hospitality, it is customary throughout all Italy for man and wife to eat together alone.‡ In the morning, afternoon, and evening, the husband must not give himself any concern about his wife,

related to his prejudice: nor will the lady whom he wishes to serve look very kindly on a man who treats his own wife with unpoliteness. *Che cuore deve avere!* says she: *Io non mene fido sicuro.*"

* *Moore*, II. 406, 7. "But when French manners began to spread over Europe, and to insinuate themselves among nations the most opposite in character to the French, jealousy was first held up as the most detestable of all the passions."—A little farther on this traveller accounts for the separation of married people in company, in the following manner: "As in England after the restoration, people, to shew their aversion to the puritans, turned every appearance of religion into ridicule, and from the extreme of hypocrisy, flew at once to that of profligacy; so in Italy from the custom of secluding the wife from all mankind but her husband, it became the fashion that she should never be seen with her husband, and yet always have a man at her elbow." Since the time the above was written things have considerably altered. *Fragmente über Italien*, I. p. 187, 8.

† *Piozzi*, I. 69. ‡ *Moore*, II. 409.

unless he would expose himself to ridicule and hatred. The cicisbeo appears at the toilette, where he concerts with his lady the amusements of the afternoon and evening. After dinner he accompanies her to the public walks, the assemblies, and the theatre. In company and at the opera, he presents to her coffee and other refreshments; sorts her cards; assists her at play; performs for her all the little services he can, and then attends her home. During the times of the greatest licentiousness, the women of Paris and Versailles had not so much liberty as those of the great cities of Italy at present enjoy.* This unbounded liberty has had the most pernicious effect on morals. According to the testimony of all well-informed travellers, pleasure is not tasted, but swallowed whole at Venice; and virtue is scarcely known by name.† Genoa is still the principal seat of cicisbeism, and of that

* *Moore*, I. p. 240. In Malta, the women are closely confined, as are those of the middling classes in Sicily. *De Borch*, *I.* p. 197. II. 31.

† *Piozzi*, I. p. 181, 2. "On ne goute pas les plaisirs ici, on les avale—for the same reason as there are more females, who practise gallantry only because there are more women there who do their own way, and follow unrestrained where passion, appetite, or imagination lead them." See also *Lettres de la Princesse de G.*— I. 112,

city even an Italian proverb says, that the women are as destitute of modesty as the men of integrity.* The women of Bologna, Naples, and other great cities, vie with those of Venice and Genoa.† The Italian ladies formerly prided themselves on their constancy in love.‡ This virtue also is said to have taken its flight from most countries, or at least to be very rare.§ The fair females of Italy accustom their confessors to be as indulgent as the public in general; ‖ or if they meet with one who is too rigid, and denies them absolution, they either chuse another who is less severe, or they practise

* *Archenholz*, IV. p. 167. *Lettres sur quelques contrées de l'Europe*, I. p. 109.

† *Ibid.* IV. p. 107, V. p. 177, 189.

‡ *Moore*, II. p. 403. "In Italy such levity (as the French) is viewed with contempt, and constancy is by both sexes still classed amongst the virtues."

§ *Archenholz*, V. p. 177. The motto of the fair sex in this country is understood to be: *Molti averne, un goderne, et cangiar spesso*—"to have many, to enjoy one, and to change often." It is likewise said that they frequently repeat these lines of Metastatio's:

E la fede degli amanti
Come l'Araba fenice,
Che vi sia, ciascun lo dice
Dove sia, nessun lo sa.

"The fidelity of lovers is like the Arabian Phœnix. Every body says that there is such a bird, but nobody knows where to find it."..The frequent change of lovers has, of late years, produced a visible decline in cicisbeism. *Fragmente über Italien*, I. p. 187.

‖ *Piozzi*, I. p. 101. "And your confessor?" cried I, "Oh! why, he is used to it"—in the Milanese dialect *è assuefad.*

abstinence for a time, that by their apparent conversion they may obtain pardon for their sins, and that when the old score is wiped off they may begin a new account with the greater confidence.* The freedom and the facility of the ladies have utterly ruined the profession of public courtezans throughout all Italy. The courtezans of Venice formerly surpassed all others in beauty, wealth and consequence; but at present that city contains none that can dispute with the noble Venetian females the possession of their lovers, or by their expensive style of living excite the envy of the ladies.† Perhaps it may be affirmed that another evil of no less magnitude than the corruption of the morals of the fair sex results from cicisbeism; I mean the frivolous manner in which the men pass their

* The character and sentiments of ladies of this description are delineated in a masterly manner by Moore, in his *View of Society and Manners in Italy*, I. p. 516, 518.

† *Moore's View of Italy*, I. p. 156. "This profession (of public courtezans) according to all accounts, formerly flourished at Venice with a degree of splendour unknown in any other capital of Europe; and very considerable exactions were raised to the use of the state, at particular times, from the wealthiest of these dealers. This excise, it would appear, has been pushed beyond what the trade could bear; for it is at present in a state of wretchedness and decay; the best of the business, as it is said, being now carried on, for mere pleasure, by people who do not avow themselves of the profession."

time, being prevented by the continual service of the ladies from attending to useful occupations. Moore justly observed that it would scarcely be possible for an Englishman, or a German to submit to such abject slavery as that to which the Italian cicisbeos doom themselves.* If even the Italians be so gallant as Mrs. Piozzi decribes them, still this gallantry is purchased at much too dear a rate.†

In Germany the French language, fashions, manners and social habits, have, during the last generation, made a much greater progress than the corrupt morals of that people; they have received greater encouragement at courts than in cities, in the south than in the north of Germany, from the women than from the men. Such was the opinion expressed by foreigners of both sexes who were acquainted with Great Britain, had seen

* *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 401.

† *Piozzi* I. p. 72, 73. "Nothing to speak the truth can exceed the agreeableness of a well-bred Italian's address, when speaking to a lady, whom he alone knows how to flatter, so as to retain her dignity and not lose his own; respectful, yet tender; attentive, not officious; the politeness of a man of fashion here is true politeness, free from all affectation, and honestly expressive of what he really feels a true value of the person spoken to, without the smallest desire of shewing himself, equally removed from foppery on one side or indifference on the other."

France and Italy, and were consequently competent to form a comparison between all those countries and their courts, and the people and courts of Germany.* Moore proved himself an accurate observer, when he judged that the ladies of the court of Berlin had much more of the air of Frenchwomen, than those of any other court; and when he thought he could perceive, that cicisbeism was neither less general, nor less openly avowed at the courts of Berlin and Vienna, than in Italy. Secret amours and illicit connections take place in all the German courts and cities, as well as in all the other courts and cities of polished Europe. It is, however, not the less certain that for a generation past, morals have improved several degrees; and that neither the princes, nor the great, nor their mistresses dare now bid such open defiance to public opinion as they did, so lately as in the first half of the eighteenth century.

There was a time when the English court took that of France for its model, and when the English of rank and for-

* *Moore's View of Manners in France*, &c. II. p. 180—183, 338, &c. *Piozzi*, II. p. 299, 329.

tune copied the manners of the French, and recommended them to their children as the only standard of politeness. This imitation of French fashions and manners has declined during the last thirty years in the same proportion as the British nation became more independent, and that people, whom all others emulated, began to copy the English in dress, houses, furniture, equipages, and amusements. As laudable as the independent spirit of the English may be, so unjust and extravagant was the prejudice with which all classes in England were prepossessed against every thing foreign, and especially whatever bore the name of French.* The revolution has cured the French of their Anglomania; and it is to be hoped that the astonishing achievements performed by the French in war, will inspire the English with that respect which a great and martial nation certainly deserves. But nobody can give us such correct notions respecting the former sentiments of his nation as a Briton.

* *Archenholz*, II. p. 400, 401. III. p. 197, 8. *Von Watsdorff*, 157, 8. "If you would give any one an idea of something truly mean, abject, ridiculous, and absurd, only annex the words—perfectly French."

"It is true," says Moore,* "that the French manners are adopted in almost every country of Europe; they prevail all over Germany, and the northern courts. They are gaining ground, though with a slower pace, in Spain and in the Italian states. This is not the case in England. The English manners are universal in the provinces, prevail in the capital, and are to be found uncontaminated even at court.

"In all the countries above-mentioned the body of the people behold this preference to foreign manners with disgust. But in all those countries, the sentiments of the people are disregarded; whereas in England popularity is of real importance; and the higher a man's rank is, the more he will feel the loss of it.

"Besides, a prejudice against French manners is not confined to the lower ranks in England: it is diffused over the whole nation. Even those who have none of the usual prejudices; who do all manner of justice to the talents and ingenuity of their neighbours; who approve of French manners in French

* *View of Society, &c. in France*, I. 238.

people; yet cannot suffer them when grafted on their countrymen. Should an English gentleman think this kind of grafting at all admissible, it will be in some of the lowest classes with whom he is connected, as his tailor, barber, valet-de-chambre, or cook; but never in his friend.

"I can scarcely remember an instance of an English man of fashion, who has evinced in his dress or style of living a preference to French manners, who did not lose by it in the opinion of his countrymen.

"What I have said of French manners is applicable to foreign manners in general, which are all in some degree French, and the particular differences of which are not distinguished by the English."

In no country of Europe was the French language more common than in the United Netherlands: but this was not the case with French fashions, and still less with French manners, if we except the families belonging to the old court at the Hague, and a few rich and distinguished houses in the other towns. Females of rank and fortune dressed partly in the French style, but not with

a view to please or to gain admirers. The Dutch had the character of being affectionate husbands, rather than gallant lovers; and the ladies of Holland preferred faithful and tender husbands to suitors distinguished for gallantry and politeness.* The men animated by love for their wives and children, pursued their avocations too assiduously to signalize themselves in the listless service of love; and the women devoted themselves to the education of their offspring, the management of their domestic concerns, and even the affairs of their husbands too zealously to have either time or inclination to receive the attentions and flatteries of gallants.† Ruinous luxury in houses, furniture, dress, table, and equipages; expensive pleasures, and seductive dissipations were either wholly unknown, or at least much more rare than in the poorest countries of our division of the globe.‡ The men in general passed the few hours of leisure which their avocations left them, in colleges, as they were denominated, or clubs formed by a number of friends and acquaintances of similar sentiments, and

* *Grabner*, p. 88, 203. † *Ibid.* p. 204, 5.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 203, 213.

having similar pursuits.* Even the assemblies and the entertainments at which the sexes were intermixed, had so little of the French tincture, that it was not uncommon for gentlemen to put on their hats and smoke in the presence of ladies. Unmarried females never received visits from their admirers till the latter had made formal proposals of marriage. Time alone can shew whether the long residence of French armies in the United Provinces will produce as great an alteration in the good old morals of the inhabitants, as they have done in the political constitution of the country.

* *Grabner*, 234, 5.

CHAPTER III.

Brief Comparison of the Personal Advantages, of the Education and Accomplishments, of the Prerogatives and Consequence, of the more or less Comfortable Situation, and of the Purity or Corruption of the Morals of the Female Sex, in the principal Countries of polished Europe.

"WHAT!" methinks I hear many of my fair readers exclaim:—"a comparison of the personal advantages of our sex in the principal countries of Europe! Is it intended to establish a tribunal, before which we are to be summoned from every region of Europe, and from which, after a due investigation, a final decision is to be pronounced on a subject in which we are so deeply interested? Woe to the judge, if he fails to do us justice; and in particular, if in his own name he dares to exercise the strictest impartiality!"—

Had I traversed every country of Eu-

rope, I should not venture, upon my single judgment to decide, either for or against the visible charms of the fair sex of whole regions. My lovely readers shall have no occasion to accuse me either of blind prejudice or partiality; they will rather feel themselves under obligations to me for collecting the observations and opinions of connoisseurs, without myself interfering in the least in the difficult and important question, whether the fair or the dark; the good-natured and gay, or the grave and over-awing; regular beauty or more engaging charms deserve the preference.

The female sex in the polished countries of Europe forms two grand and numerous divisions both with respect to personal qualifications, and the endowments of the understanding and heart. These are the southern and the northern Europeans. To the former belong the women of Portugal, Spain, Italy, Sicily, Malta, and those of the southern provinces of France. The northern Europeans consist, exclusively of the female sex among the Slavonic nations, of the women of the middle and north of France, those of Switzerland, Germany, the Ne-

therlands, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

If we in the first place compare the women of the south and those of the north of Europe, in respect to colour or complexion, we shall find from the unanimous testimony of all observers, that the females of southern Europe cannot in this particular sustain any competition with the inhabitants of the northern regions. The former have no freshness in their complexion, and are inclined to a brownish or sallow tint; and even though their skin may be of a brilliant white, they nevertheless want the roseate hue that blooms on the cheeks and lips of the natives of the north of Europe.

The women of Spain,* the southern provinces of France, and Italy, † are of a

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 309. "Le teint d'une Espagnole ne se pare jamais d'un éclat emprunté. L'art ne supplée point au coloris que lui a refusé la nature en la soumettant à l'influence d'une zône brulante. .... L'amour a été pour elle trop avare des ces tresors d'albâtre qui sont ses plus charmans trochets." Fischer, among the other charms of the women of Biscay, likewise praises the freshness of their complexion; and the same traveller speaks still more highly of that of the natives of Valencia.

† *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 70. "The complexion for the most part is of a clear brown, sometimes fair, but very seldom florid, or of that bright fairness which is common in England and Saxony."—See also the *Fragmente über Italien*, I. p. 171, 191.

brownish, sallow, or pallid complexion. The Portuguese,* on the contrary, and in particular the Maltese are extremely fair. † Upon the whole the women of the south of Europe are superior in personal beauty to the men, especially in Portugal. ‡ In the north of Europe it is uncertain which of the sexes contains the greatest number of handsome individuals. §

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, II. p. 296. "The women are fair; they have a very fine skin." The *ci-devant* duke de Châtelet speaks highly of their beautiful carnation; *Voy. en Portugal*, I. p. 72; as does likewise *Dumouriez*, p. 164: "The Portuguese women have the most beautiful carnation, the best teeth, and the finest hair of any in Europe."

† *De Borch*, I. p. 226. "The sex is very fair at Malta. Its principal charms are a complexion of a brilliant whiteness," &c.

‡ *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 296. "The men and the women of Portugal seem to belong to two different nations: the men are small, ill-shaped, stunted, sallow, without dignity in their action, without nobleness in their gait, and without grace in their deportment. The women are well-made, well-proportioned," &c. *Croker*, p. 267, 8. and, in particular, p. 296, 7. The author of the *Fragmente über Italien* is of opinion, that, upon the whole, the women of Italy have been less favoured by nature in respect to personal beauty than the men.

§ In Norway the males are, beyond comparison, more handsome than the females.—*Mumsen's Tagebuch einer Reise nach dem südlichen Theile von Norwegen.* The author of the *Fragmente über Italien* thinks the men of Italy handsomer than the women. This opinion widely differs, like many others of the same traveller, from the sentiments of other observers of the greatest veracity. Upon the whole, the tone of this writer is too complimentary, as that of some of his predecessors was too unfavourable. In the Hebrides, at least in the island of Mull, the women are small, ugly, and

Among the women of the north of Europe, not only native but likewise foreign writers admit, that for delicacy of complexion, and for a brilliant red and white, no females can vie with those of the British islands.* If in such a place as London, we were to meet with a greater number of beautiful faces than in any other city, this would be no proof that the women of England surpass the natives of all the other regions of the north of Europe, in delicacy of skin, and the charms of complexion. But, as Moore observes, "English beauty is more remarkable in the country than in towns. The peasantry of no country in Europe can stand a comparison in point of looks with those of England; that race of people have the conveniences of life in no other country in such perfection. The English country-girls, taken collectively, are unquestionably the handsomest in the world." If the natives of any part of the British dominions deserve a preference

ill-shaped. Their complexion is said to be spoiled by the smoke of their turf-fires.—*Voyage en Angleterre, en Ecosse, &c. par Faujas Saint Fond*, II. p. 89.

* *Archenholz*, II. at the commencement of Sect. XII.—*Von Watzdorff*, p. 164. *Moore's View of Italy*, II. 67. "For a brilliant red and white, and all the charms of complexion, no women are equal to the English."

in this particular, it is those of St. Kilda and other adjacent islands,* where strangers who reside for any length of time are said to acquire a fairer complexion.

Next to their own country-women, British travellers extol the females of Germany, and especially those of Saxon blood, as the fairest of their sex;† and in this opinion the French and other foreigners coincide.‡ If the like praise has not been bestowed on the women of Holland and Scandinavia, the only reason perhaps is, because their personal charms have not been noticed by so many travellers and with so much attention as those of the sex in England and Germany. The Dutch women, according to the testimony of a modern writer, are not inferior to their female neighbours for delicacy and fairness of complexion, and a blooming colour; and he thinks the children of no country superior or even equal

* *Martin's Voyage to St. Kilda*, p. 36.

† *Moore's View of France and Germany*, II. p. 23.—"This country (Germany) abounds in female beauty. There is more expression in the countenances of French women; but the ladies of Germany have the advantage in the fairness of their skin and the beauty of their complexion."

‡ Almost all the French travellers, both ancient and modern, who have visited Germany, make mention of *les belles Saxonnes*. Bourgoing particularly admired the rosy lips of the German fair, and the sweetness of their smile, II. p. 308.

in beauty to those of the United Netherlands.*

The difference of complexion and colour which distinguishes the natives of the south from those of the north of Europe, is attended with a similar distinction in the colour of the hair and eyes. The females of the south of Europe, have almost without exception dark, brown, or black hair and eyes. Among those of the north we find on the contrary, innumerable beautiful shades in the hair and eyes, from the lightest flaxen and blue, to the darkest brown or black. The southern Europeans have as luxuriant a growth of hair as the northern;† but the hair of the former is neither so fine and so silky, nor has it often such a beautiful natural curl as that of the latter. One characteristic mark of the Italian women, and probably of all the females of the south of Europe, is that the hair encroaches farther upon the forehead than in the natives of the north.‡ It might naturally be supposed that the black eye would lose much of

* *Grabner*, p. 80—82.

† *Moore*, *Buorgoing*, and *Tableau de Lisbonne*, as above.

‡ *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 69. "A great profusion of dark hair, which seems to encroach upon the forehead, rendering it short and narrow."

its effect from the uniformity of the colour of the pupil and iris; but yet the eyes of the women of Italy, Spain, and Portugal, are wonderfully expressive; and some people indeed think that they say too much.*

In regard to the beauty of the general outline of the face, the regularity of the features, and the symmetry of its different parts, it would appear that neither the northern nor the southern Europeans can claim any pre-eminence. The only difference which exists in this particular is, that if a hundred natives of the south be taken at random and compared with the same number of women of the north, ninety of the latter will be found handsomer than ninety of the former: but of these two or three will, perhaps, surpass any of the northern females.† Some

* *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 70. "The black eye certainly labours under one disadvantage, which is, that from the iris and pupil being of the same colour, the contraction and dilatation of the latter is not seen, by which the eye is abridged of half its powers. Yet the Italian eye is wonderfully expressive; some people think it says too much." See also *Bourgoing du Chatelet*, and *Tableau de Lisbonne*, in the places already quoted.

† *Ibid.* II. p. 67. "If a hundred or any greater number of English women were taken at random and compared with the same number of the wives and daughters of the citizens of Rome, I am convinced that ninety of the English would be found handsomer than ninety of the Romans; but the probability is, that two or three out of the hundred Italians would have finer countenances than any of the English."

much the greater is the difference that appears in the expression of the face and eyes of the women of the south and north. The looks and the features of the former manifest more fire, more voluptuousness, a stronger desire and susceptibility of enjoyment: those of the latter indicate more innocence and purity, more benevolence and goodness of heart; and if it be asserted that the goddess of love has conferred her magic cestus on the one in preference to the rest of the sex; it cannot be denied that the graces have adorned the countenance of the other with the most attractive charms. In the expression of the eyes and face, the women of the north as well as those of the south of Europe, differ exceedingly from one another. The Spanish females, among whom those of Andalusia bear away the prize of beauty, have at the first sight a grave, and even repulsive look. But when they fix upon you their large black eyes, and accompany their expressive looks with a smile, insensibility itself, as Bourgoing observes, would fall at their feet.*

* II. p. 309. "Grave et même un peu triste au premier aspect si elle ouvre sur vous ses grands yeux noirs pleins d'expression si elle accompagne ce regard d'un sourire, l'insensibilité même tombe a ses genoux."

According to the observations of the anonymous author of the Picture of Lisbon, the Portuguese women are more gentle, more obliging, and more cheerful than the Spanish, without being the less charming.* In Italy the females of Venice bears a greater resemblance to the Portuguese,† and the Roman women are more like those of Spain.‡ At Rome there are more fine women in the middling and lower than in the higher classes; and the countenances of the Roman beauties most forcibly reminds you of the figures represented in the ancient statues and busts. § As the country-people in the vicinity of Florence are accounted the handsomest in Italy, so the women of Pisa are deemed more beautiful than those

* " Elles ont le propos doux, seduisant, persuasif; elles sont en même temps douces, aimables, affectueuses, caressantes."

† *Piozzi*, I. p. 409. " I see not here the attractive beauty which caught my eye at Venice; but the women at Rome have a more Juno-like carriage, and fill up one's idea of Livia and Agrippina well enough." *Archenholz*, IV. p. 66.

‡ *Ibid. Archenholz*, V. p. 151. *Moore's View of Italy*, I. p. 387. " The Italians in general have a remarkable air of gravity. I observed something of this at Venice; but I think it is much stronger at Rome. The Roman ladies have a languor in their countenances, which promises as much sensibility as the brisk look of the French." See the same work, I. p. 67, 69, 70.

§ *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 67—70. " The nose generally either aquiline, or continued in a straight line from the lower part of the brow; a full and short upper lip; the eyes

of any other city of Tuscany.* Naples, the most populous of all the Italian cities, contains the smallest proportion of female beauty.† Sicily and Malta abound so much the more in these master-pieces of nature; and in both those islands the sex bears a greater resemblance to the women of Portugal and Venice, than to those of Spain and Rome ‡ In the vicinity of Etna the bud of beauty begins early to expand, but for want of fostering care, it fades before it is fully blown.§

Moore was perfectly correct in his remark that the features of the southern Europeans, which have a fine expression

large, and of a sparkling black."—*Fragmente über Italien*, I. p. 191, 2.

* *Archenholz*, IV. p. 149.

† *Ibid.* V. p. 189.

‡ *De Borch*, I. 226. "The sex is very beautiful at Malta. The principal attractions of the women are .... an extreme vivacity in conversation and in every action." II. p. 124. "In general, the women of Sicily are handsome, with Grecian profiles, and uncommonly affable and polite."

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 125, 6. "The complexion of the sex in childhood is extremely beautiful. In this state of purity it remains till the age of nine to twelve years. After that period, the vicissitudes of the climate, the scorching heat of the sun, excessive labour, too scanty a supply of food; in a word, misery in various shapes, efface the graces of infancy, The beautiful Grecian profiles designed by a skilful hand are lengthened or swelled out; the brilliant carnation is succeeded by a sallow complexion, and at the proper age of love, the god of tenderness finds nothing left but faded flowers."

in youth, are more apt than the less expressive features of the women of the north, to become strong and masculine; and that for this reason the latter retain the appearance of youth longer than the former.* If there be any exception to this general rule, it is to be found in the females of Holland, who it is affirmed lose their beauty at the early age of twenty-five years, when they begin to look old and wrinkled, but at an advanced period of life, are again invested with new charms.†

The French women may be said to form the intermediate link between the females of the south and north; and the women of Germany, Holland, and Scandinavia, hold the same place between them and the English: though, in the opinion of a skilful British connoisseur, my countrywomen have a greater resemblance to the women of England than to the French.‡ The countenances of the

* *Moore*, II. p. 70. "It must be owned that those features which have a fine expression of sentiment and meaning, in youth, are more apt than less expressive faces to become strong and masculine. In England and Germany, the women a little advanced in life retain the appearance of youth longer than in Italy."—See also *Fragmente über Italien*, I. p. 173.

† *Grabner*, p. 82.

‡ *Moore's View of France*, II. p. 24. "They have a greater resemblance to English women than to French, yet they differ considerably from them both."

French have commonly a look of greater cheerfulness and vivacity than those of the females of Germany and England; and seem to invite to a nearer acquaintance.* In the faces of English women foreigners find nothing so attractive as the expression of the most amiable modesty.† Their very countrymen, however, acknowledge that their modesty very often borders too closely upon coldness, disdain, and restraint.‡ To the beauties of Germany, on the contrary, foreigners pay this compliment, that without the smart air of French, or the reserve of the English, they have a more placid look, and more enchanting smile than either.§

In treating of the shape of the females in the north and south, it is necessary to

* *Moore's France*, II. p. 23. *Bourgoing*, II. 308.

† *Bourgoing* and *Archenholz*, as above. *Watzdorf*, p. 167.

‡ *Moore*, II. p. 23. "The manner of the English women is not so devoid of restraint; and a stranger, especially if he be a foreigner, may observe a look which borders on disdain in her countenance. Even among the loveliest features something of a sulky air often appears."

§ *Ibid.* p. 24. "A German beauty, without the smart air of the one, or the reserve of the other, has generally a more placid look than either." *Bourgoing*, II. p. 308, observes: "On est attiré en Allemagne, pars leurs lèvres de rose, et la douceur de leur sourire."

make a due distinction between tallness of stature and delicacy of figure. A tall woman is never, or at at least very rarely seen among the southern Europeans thus, though their countenances may possess the highest charms, yet, on account of the smallness or mediocrity of their stature, they never can be deemed perfect models of personal beauty. We must either charge all foreign observers with partiality, or admit that no country produces so many admirably beautiful female figures as England.* But who can establish the proportion which the females of Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands, bear to the women of England in respect to shape? It is asserted that the Dutch women are in general larger than those of Germany, but that a want of symmetry often detracts from their Juno-like figure.†

What the southern Europeans are deficient in stature, is made up to them in elegance and delicacy of shape, qualities which, according to witnesses of the greatest veracity, must be almost univer-

* *Archenholz*, II. Sect. XII. *Bourgoing*, II. 308.

† *Grabner*, p. 80. The hands and feet of the Dutch women are said to be often disproportionably large.

sal among the fair sex in Portugal,* and Spain,† in Sicily and Malta,‡ but not so common in Italy itself. A noble and easy carriage, a graceful agility not only in their gait, but in all the motions of their body, § are as general; or perhaps still more so among the females of the south of Europe. It is in these last-mentioned qualifications, that the northern Europeans are unable to sustain a comparison with the southern. Whether extraordinary flexibility of the body be not conferred by nature at the expence of superior advantages, or may not be acquired by practice is a different question.

If a wise education consists in the art of judiciously developing all the useful and ornamental faculties and qualities of

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 296. "Les femmes sont bien faites, bien proportionnées, bien elançées.—Elles ont une taille suelte, fine, delicate." The Portuguese women endeavour by all possible means to make their breasts grow large, or at least to procure the appearance of them. *Du Chatelet*, I. p. 72.

† *Bourgoing*, II, p. 309. "Ou trouve--t--on des tailles plus sueltes," &c.

‡ *DeBorch*, I. p. 226. —"une taille extrêmement suelte.

§ Respecting the Spanish women, *Bourgoing*, II. p. 309. exclaims: "Ou trouve--t--on plus de souplesse dans les mouvements---plus de legereté dans la demarche?---*De Borch*, II. 124, informs us that the women of Sicily have a "demarche aisée, port noble, pied petit."---Respecting the women of Malta, see the same writer, I. p. 226.

the body, understanding and heart of children, and in correcting and supplying as much as possible all natural defects; it may be asserted that in the south of Europe there is no such thing as a good education of the female sex, and that though the system of instruction adopted in the north is not what it ought to be, it is, however, far superior to that formerly pursued.

Among the Portuguese, girls are not immured in convents, but they remain till the period of their marriage under the inspection of their mothers, or of female domestics, to whose care they are committed.* They are not instructed either in needle-work or in domestic economy; either in foreign languages or in ornamental or useful arts and sciences; and least of all in the duties which they ought once to fulfil as wives, mothers and mistresses of families. They are taught nothing but a few prayers and religious ceremonies; at most reading and writing; but to the latter, many females of respectable families are utter strangers. Parents think they have done sufficient for their daughters if they only keep them

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 296---9.

in the most rigid confinement. Some young Portuguese ladies are never permitted to quit the paternal roof, even to go to church, but hear mass in the domestic chapels. Others are allowed to go abroad, but not unattended. They are carefully cut off from all society with young persons of the other sex, who are not even admitted as visitors in houses where there are any unmarried females. All these gaoler-like precautions are easily and frequently frustrated. The unemployed, uneducated, and ardent Portuguese ladies, who early arrive at the period of puberty, find means to seduce their maid-servants, or are themselves seduced by the latter. They converse with their lovers in the silent language of the fingers, and give them meetings when their mothers are asleep, or at church. The same arts they continue to practise after their marriage, so that it is scarcely possible to find in all Europe women who possess more cunning and are more thoroughly versed in every species of deceit. Considering the total neglect of their education, and their continual seclusion, it is surprising that they are so lively, so talkative, and so agreea-

ble as they actually are.* On the other hand, we cannot wonder in the least that, besides religious exercises, intrigue should be their only occupation, and that they should pass the greatest part of their time on their sofas, or window-seats. Would it not appear from all these particulars that the women of Portugal, like those of the Orientals, are designed for no other purpose than merely for the grosser pleasures of love, and the procreation of children?

The Spanish females, both married and unmarried, enjoy much greater liberty than the Portuguese; and this freedom affords them opportunities of hearing and seeing in society, at the theatre and in the public walks, many things to which the women of Portugal are utter strangers. Their superior experience and knowledge, however, contribute but little to the real cultivation of their minds. The married women in general give themselves no kind of concern either about their husbands, or their children,

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, as above. "Leur education est absolument negligée; elles n'en recoivent aucune; elles sont abandonnées à elles-mémes: elles ne doivent qu'à la nature, l'aimabilité, l'affabilité et les autres qualités qu'on decouvre en elles."

or their domestic economy. They trifle away their time in the company of their cortejos; and the latter are also prevented, by their constant attendance on their ladies, from polishing their own minds and acquiring useful knowledge. Both either never read at all, or a few plays and novels are the utmost extent of their reading.* Girls are relinquished almost entirely to the care of ill-bred and immoral domestics, who early blast the bud of virgin modesty by their obscene jests and stories.† If the discourse and example of the servants leave any relics of this most precious jewel of the female mind,‡ they are infallibly destroyed by the indecent jokes and tales of the mother, or of her male and female acquaintances, or by the licentiousness of the theatre, of their plays and romances. Hence the young girls in Spain are as destitute of modesty as the married women, though they are not so depraved

* *Townsend*. II. 154. "Books are little read: all who are not engaged in business, are occupied in their attendance on the ladies with whom nothing of this kind is heard of." *Bourgoing*, II, p. 313, 319.

† *Bourgoing*, II. p. 318. "Mais qu'attendre d'elles, lorsqu'on les voit abandonnées presque exclusivement à la tutelle des domestiques, même dans les maisons les plus distinguées?"

‡ Croker praises the modesty and reserve of the Andalusian women, p. 234.

as the latter.* The Spanish women demonstrate that the ignorance of virtue is not advantageous, and that nowhere more inconstant wives, more careless mothers and mistresses of families, and more debauched virgins are to be found than among those nations where the education of the sex is either wholly neglected, or at least where the system is extremely bad.

The females of Italy grow up and pass their time nearly in the same manner as those of Spain. It seems to be scarcely suspected that there is such a thing as female education, and that women and girls may cultivate their minds, or at least find amusement in the perusal of good books.† Even in the largest cities ladies of the highest rank discourse with one another in their provincial dialect: nay, many of them, in conversing with foreigners are unable to express themselves in pure Italian. When they attempt it and make blunders, they feel as

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 314. "The girls though, in general, unreserved in their deportment, grant much less than their appearance would lead a person to expect; and it is very rarely that they encroach upon the rights of marriage."

† *Piozzi*, I. p. 169, and in particular 182. "Here is no struggle for female education as with us, no resources in study, no necessity of reading to supply without disgrace the evening's chat, &c." *Archenholz*, IV. p. 180.

little embarrassment as when they are questioned concerning their domestic economy, when they frankly acknowledge their total ignorance of the subject. The Italian women do not even think it their duty to bestow attention on household affairs, or to take upon themselves the superintendence of the servants, the kitchen and the table.* If at dinner or supper, most, and perhaps the best of the dishes are spoiled in the cooking, the liquorish palate of the mistress of the house is certainly disappointed, but not the least blame attaches to her, because none of the guests expects her to give herself any concern about the business of the kitchen. This exoneration from all the duties of family management may be accounted for, among the higher ranks, by the ancient and present condition of the sex. In former ages Italian ladies of quality durst not intermeddle in domestic concerns for fear of exciting the jealousy of their husbands. In modern times they cannot attend to them, because their cicisbeos occupy all those hours which are not passed in bed or at table.

* *Piozzi*, as above. "No duties of family management, no bill of fare to be looked over in the morning, no account-book to be settled at noon."

It is a phenomenon much more extraordinary that the same listless inactivity should prevail among the women of the middling and lower classes, among whom cicisbeism has not been introduced, and who have been more or less relieved from their formerly rigorous confinement. Even mechanics and other handicraftsmen are obliged to leave their occupations to go to market for provisions, to cook them on their return, to wash the dishes, and clean the house, while the women look out of the window, or dress themselves and walk abroad.* In the very inns and the houses of the great, men perform almost all the domestic offices, which, in the north of Europe, are considered as female occupations. Men wait upon you, cook, sweep, and clean the house and furniture, nay even make the beds of females, both married and single. When will the Italians begin to acquire more correct ideas of the duties of the sex, and the purposes for which it was designed? And when will they reduce these better notions to general practice?

The want of a good education and of

* *Archenholz*, V. p. 190, 191,

suitable instruction does not prevent the women of various parts of Italy and Sicily from being like the Spanish and Portuguese, agreeable company, or at least pleasing in conversation; a character which is given more particularly to the Venetian females.*

It seems, at first, difficult to reconcile the great number of learned females whom Italy has produced during the last centuries with the prevailing indolence and ignorance of the women of that country. Italy in later times possessed, and still possesses, women celebrated for their erudition, or literary performances, or their talents as *improvisatori*.† To me the general ignorance of the sex, and the literary attainments of some individuals belonging to it, appear so far from being incompatible, that, in my opinion, a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon may be deduced from the condition of the Italian women. The great majority of females being bred up from their earliest infancy neither in useful studies nor useful occupations, love, in

* *Piozzi and De Borch*, as above. *Archenholz*, IV. p. 66, &c.

† *Piozzi*, I. p. 318. *Moore's Italy*, II. p. 196. *Archenholz*, IV. p. 109, 110. *De Borch*, II. p. 92, 93.

their maturer years, to continue to indulge the *dolce far niente*, and to pass their lives sometimes in agreeable, sometimes in tedious idleness. On the contrary, those more highly favoured females, on whom nature has conferred powers too active to remain unemployed, apply themselves from a natural impulse of their genius to the study of some art or science to which their inclination or circumstances may direct them. Italian women of this description, whether married or single, are enabled to make a greater proficiency in arts and sciences than females of the north of Europe who possess an equal share of talents, because they are not interrupted like the latter, by domestic concerns and the education of their children.

Respecting the education of the female sex in France I have already introduced the most important particulars in the preceding portions of this work. If my readers recollect the facts and observations which I have already communicated, they will find, that the women of France were indeed educated and instructed with much greater care than the Spaniards and Italians, but that the instruction given to the lower classes was too scanty,

and the system pursued with the higher too injudicious to render females fit for the purposes which they were really and truly designed to answer. There were either no schools at all, or at least very few, for the girls belonging to the lower classes of the people in France. The daughters of people of rank and fortune were shut up in convents till the period of their marriage, and after the nuptials were launched all at once into the vortex of the great world or the dissipations of the capital, which left no time for serious pursuits and for the cultivation of their minds. Their continual intercourse with persons of the other sex, the incessant opportunities of conversing or hearing others converse on men and things, and even on subjects of art and science, of daily seeing or reading comedies, and tragedies, operas and other poetical compositions, or novels, gave a certain polish to their understandings, but not real cultivation. French women of quality paid very little more attention to the domestic economy and the education of their children than the ladies of Spain and Italy. The women of the lower classes had likewise much less to do in France than in Germany or England;

and men were therefore employed in that country to perform many domestic offices which, according to our manners, belong exclusively to women, and by which servants of the other sex would think themselves in some measure degraded. So great, so opulent, and so polished a people as the French, could never be without some females distinguished for their poetical or other literary abilities. I have just shewn, in treating of the Italian women, that an opinion of the general state of the intellectual cultivation of the female sex in any country cannot be formed from the examples of a few individuals of extraordinary attainments.

In England the education of females is far from excellent, and upon the whole, the higher the rank and the greater the fortune of the parents, so much the worse it appears to be. Women of quality and fortune are incessantly engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, and pay as little attention to their children as to the domestic economy.* They relinquish their daughters in early in-

* *Wollstonecraft's Rights of Woman*, p. 116, &c. *Wendeborn*, II. p. 300, &c.

fancy entirely to the care of servants,* or send them to boarding-schools, where girls are confined still more rigidly than boys, where they are more closely crowded and more early debauched.† In the middling classes women devote themselves much more to the management of their domestic concerns and the education of their children, than to expensive pleasures and dissipations.‡ Among these classes it is no uncommon thing, according to the testimony of an Englishwoman, for mothers to spoil their children by too great indulgence, and to treat them like demi-gods.§ The instruction received by most females in England consists rather in fine needle-work and other ornamental female acquisitions, in the science of domestic economy, and the arts of dress and pleasure, than in those attainments which adorn the mind and cultivate the heart. Unless there were a great want of real cultivation how could women of the great and polite world flock to the doors of *cunning men* to learn from them the secrets of futu-

* *Wollstonecraft*, p. 442.

† *Wollstonecraft*, p. 377. *Wendeborn*, II. p. 311. *Von Watzdorf*, p. 165.

‡ *Archenholz*, II. chap. XII.

§ *Wollstonecraft*, p. 442.

rity?* During every generation of the two last centuries England has produced female poets, or authors, or artists of greater or less celebrity.† It is not, however, matter of such surprize, that a rich and enlightened nation should have produced so many literary females as that it has not numbered still more among the daughters of the land. One of the greatest obstacles to the real and more general cultivation of Englishwomen is the separation of the sexes when once the first golden days, or the blooming charms of youthful beauty are fled. To this separation I shall, in the sequel, have occasion to advert, and shall here merely touch upon the equivocal interest which public affairs are said to excite in the British fair. Some writers assert,

* *Wollstonecraft*, p. 415.

† Among the female writers. I have frequently quoted two, Mrs. Piozzi and Mary Wollstonecraft. The latter declares Mrs. Catharine Macaulay to be the woman of the greatest abilities that Britain ever produced. "The very word respect," says she, p. 253, "brings Mrs. Macaulay to my remembrance—the woman of the greatest abilities, undoubtedly, that this country has ever produced. Catharine Macaulay was an example of intellectual acquirements supposed to be incompatible with the weakness of her sex."—Mrs. Macaulay's principal works are, her History of England; a Treatise on Education; and another on the Immutability of Moral Truth. Male critics assign a much lower value to all these works than the above-mentioned female panegyrist.

and others deny,* that the Englishwomen are fond of taking part in political conversations and discussions. If they do, I am equally in doubt whether they give satisfaction to the men, and whether they render themselves or the general conversation more agreeable by it.† Not but that women may take a lively interest in political affairs and express their sentiments on those subjects in an entertaining manner. It is, moreover, a considerable advantage that the relations of the countries of Europe have been multiplied and facilitated to such a degree as not only to encrease the number of political novelties but also to attract towards them more general attention than ever. But I roundly deny, that the increase of sociability among the most polished nations of Europe dates only from the period when political topics began to be discussed in society.‡ On the contrary, politeness is extinguished and the plea-

* *Archenholz*, II. p. 438. *Wendeborn*, as above.

† Miss Wollstonecraft was of opinion, that the character of women would cease to be degraded by many littlenesses, "if political and moral subjects were opened to them," p. 391.—But who prevents women from attending to those subjects? The example of this writer herself is not very inviting. She is such a furious enemy of princes and nobles, that I should not like to converse with her on political topics.

‡ This is asserted by *Archenholz*, IV. p. 63.

sures of social converse are suspended, when, in times of revolutions or of violent party-spirit, certain events engage the attention of persons of all ranks, of all ages, and of both sexes so exclusively that they can discourse of no other subject, and take up the matter with such virulence as precludes the possibility of cool investigation. At such periods the sexes separate as well as the parties. Clubs or circles are formed, the members of which converse on nothing but public affairs, and that only in the spirit of party.

If the purposes for which women are designed were only to give birth to healthy children; to bring up those children with maternal tenderness, to the best of their ability; to superintend the domestic economy with vigilant care; to love their husbands with inviolable fidelity, and to endeavour to lighten their avocations by every possible expedient;—the education of girls, and the cultivation which the sex received, was in no country more judicious than in the Batavian republic. The women of the Netherlands are almost always in the circle of their children, and are either engaged in assisting the husband in his business, or in the management of some

inferior department, most commonly in keeping the accounts and in taking and paying money. If they quit their domestic affairs or their children, it is merely for the purpose of joining some family circle, or tea-party, or taking a walk or an excursion with their husbands. Plays, balls, and other fascinating diversions are to be found only in some of the principal cities, and in these pleasures the middling classes seldom or never take a share.

It is evident that the destination, and the real happiness of women is not attained by the Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian females who make no use of the noblest faculties of the understanding, and the best qualities of the heart; who neglect their husbands, children, and domestic concerns, that they may cultivate with the less interruption adulterous connexions, or doze away life in listless indolence. It is equally clear that the ends for which women were designed, cannot be answered in following the example of the Frenchwomen belonging to the great and polite world, whose chief aim was to develope the charms of the person, and with them some of the most brilliant faculties of the mind, that, totally regardless of all

their duties to their wives, children, and families, they might perpetually go in pursuit of new pleasures. The Dutch-women accomplish a more essential portion of the purposes of female existence; and yet their occupations and pleasures are far from embracing all that the sex, under favourable exterior circumstances, is capable of performing and enjoying. The Englishwomen partly resemble the French and partly the Dutch, in respect to education and cultivation, and, therefore, among them we cannot hope to meet with many models, such as we are in quest of.—Where then, it will be asked, are they to be found?—If they exist at all, they are to be found in Germany, which excels all the other countries of our division of the globe, in the education of children and in its academical institutions.

What other region of Europe can boast of such schools for the lower classes, and in particular of such charity schools, of such schoolmasters, and such seminaries for the education of schoolmasters, as Germany? Where else shall we find so many enlightened and virtuous ministers, so attentive to the moral cultivation of the flocks committed to their care, and especially to the religious

instruction of youth?—All these institutions it is true are still susceptible of improvement and multiplication: but who can deny that philanthropic sovereigns, and genuine patriots have done more in Germany for the cultivation of the people than in any other country?

Large establishments on the plan of the English boarding schools are very rare in Germany, and it is to be hoped that their number may not increase. So much the more common are those in which a small number of children of nearly the same age, receive instruction under the superintendence of experienced teachers in all those useful and ornamental accomplishments which are necessary for well-educated females. Institutions of this kind are indispensably necessary. Where else should orphans bereft of those who gave them birth, or the children of reputable parents who reside at a great distance from towns, and are prevented by business, or other avocations, from undertaking themselves the task of education, receive the instruction suitable to their condition in life?

Those institutions, the establishmen of which Miss Wollstonecraft has recommended under the name of day-schools,

are the most frequent in Germany. Here girls are instructed from their tenderest infancy till the age of puberty, in all kinds of needle-work, reading, writing, arithmetic, foreign languages, religion, and other branches of useful knowledge, one or more hours in the day, and then return into the bosom of their families. The deficiencies which remain after having attended these schools are easily supplied by private teachers, and good ones can no where be procured on such moderate terms as in Germany, famed for arts, sciences, and literature.

All the above-mentioned institutions would not confer the palm of excellence on our country in respect to the education and culture of the female sex, were it not for the co-operation of another cause, and that the most important of all. In Germany there are the greatest number of uncorrupted and enlightened parents, who are not only tenderly attached to their children, and are ready to do all that lies in their power to promote their welfare, but who have sufficient penetration to discover how each child ought to be treated according to the difference of disposition. The talents, intelligence and virtues of parents

are of greater importance toward the formation of the youthful mind, especially of girls, than any instruction that can be purchased. The greatest defects of private education may be chiefly traced to these sources, that many parents love their children either not enough, or not with the right kind of affection; or do not know, and will not give themselves the trouble to enquire how the faculties of children mental and corporeal, and the qualities of the heart, ought to be developed.

Miss Wollstonecraft justly censures the most celebrated French and English writers on education, for having commended the talent of pleasing the men as the most important duty of women; that they have made this talent consist only in the developement and employment of personal charms; and that they have thus converted female education into the science of coquetry.* From this censure the German writers on education are exempt. Neither can it be said of the generality of parents in Germany, that they make the education of their daughters tend only to this one

* P. 170, &c.

point, the improvement of their personal charms, that they may attract the eyes and captivate the hearts of the other sex. Still less can it be asserted, as Miss Wollstonecraft affirms of her country-people, that they purposely impair the health of their daughters to render them the more delicate and attractive. With respect to physical education, as far as it relates to the health of children, there is, thanks to our enlightened physicians, but little to be desired among the higher and middling classes of our country. In regard to the developement and improvement of personal charms it may perhaps be asserted, that, upon the whole, the most essential points are too much neglected, while too great attention is paid to such as are of inferior importance; and that the latter tend to injure the hearts of girls as much as the former detracts from their personal beauty.

When nature has denied a girl an elegant figure, and a fine face, it is out of the power of art to make amends for this deficiency. But how often the fairest of her gifts are obscured by inattention to cleanliness, or neglect in dress! How often, on the contrary are inferior charms heightened by prepossessing and attrac-

tive neatness and propriety of personal appearance!—Regard for truth compels me to observe, and I do it with regret, that, in respect to cleanliness and propriety of person, my fair countrywomen in general are very far behind the English and French: and that, in the engaging neatness which is not incompatible with the utmost simplicity in attire, they are far surpassed by the former. Our ladies, if they chose, might easily learn in what ways, and in what degrees the women of France and England bestow those attentions on their persons and dress; and when they have gained this information they should not withhold from their daughters the innocent arts of beauty. By so doing they would confer on their children an infinitely greater benefit than by dressing them out at an early age with such extravagance, that the vanity of many mothers rather disfigures than embellishes the juvenile forms of their darlings. While females are yet but children in body and understanding, they ought to be treated as such in every respect, and consequently in what relates to dress. About thirty years since it was customary among respectable people of the mid-

dling classes, to give their daughters the first silk gown after they had partaken for the first time of the holy sacrament, and were advancing from the circle of childhood into the class of young women. At the present day it is not uncommon to see girls of six, eight, or ten years, flaunting in silks or other stuffs, with curled hair, and head-dresses in the highest style of fashion. The consequences of this pernicious practice of thus dressing out young girls are so obvious, that it is surprizing they have not checked it even in the vainest and blindest mothers. In this manner they inspire children prematurely with a passion for finery, and dress, which they ought to strive by all possible means to govern and to direct to a proper object. Besides the love of pomp, they engender an odious pride, which looks down with contempt on children who are more simply attired. They mortify the well-disposed children of such parents who have either too much good sense, or want the means to trick out their daughters in the same extravagant style. They mislead others whose understandings are more limited, and who likewise endeavour to make a figure by means of the splendid

attire and ornaments of their children. I hope that the example of enlightened parents of rank and fortune will contribute more and more to correct this folly, and to introduce a charming simplicity and neatness, instead of unbecoming grandeur in the attire and ornaments of children.

The disposition of many mothers to dress their children immoderately, arose from another practice which is likewise productive of very pernicious effects for the heart and health of children; I allude to the custom of taking young children into companies which are not suited to their years. Nothing is more natural than for mothers to suffer their children to accompany them, when they visit friends or acquaintances, who have children of a similar age. On the other hand nothing can be more injudicious than to take young girls to balls and pic-nics, or into large mixed companies. At the former children are the more troublesome, the smaller they are. If they are not permitted to dance with the rest they grow tired; and if any friend of the house takes pity on a little miss who is fond of dancing, the pleasure of the company is in some measure destroyed. The

child is liable to overheat herself. She conceives an immoderate, premature love of diversions where she is treated like a grown-up person, and for this reason she imagines herself of greater consequence than other children to whom the same distinction is not shewn. Even into larger mixed societies, the principal object of which is entertainment, young children should not be admitted. Their flattered vanity enables them, it is true, to endure the restraint of sitting for hours in companies, not one word of whose conversation they understand; but their presence checks the freedom of discourse. The only exceptions that might be made to the general exclusion of children from balls, assemblies, and large mixed societies, are, when parents wish to bestow a signal reward on boys or girls, who are nearly out of the years of childhood, for extraordinary diligence and exemplary behaviour. The admission of such children to the diversions, and into the societies of grown persons, would be equivalent to a public declaration, that by industry and virtue they had outstripped their age.

A free and noble carriage, an enchanting lightness of gait, and a fascinating

ease in the motions of every member are gifts which nature has conferred almost without exception on the females of the south of Europe, but of which she has been more frugal to those of the northern regions. Persons who have received these advantages from the hand of nature must not flatter themselves that they will ever be able to rival her favourites. Though this is impossible, yet by an early imitation of good models they may be enabled to approach near to them, and to relinquish or avoid those defects, by which the grace and majesty of a beautiful figure, either when in motion or at rest, are destroyed. Why were the ladies of the French court, especially during the reign of Louis XIV. the patterns of their sex in the greatest part of Europe? For no other reason, than because they had, from infancy, been accustomed to copy such models as nature had produced in a duchess of Burgundy, a Madame de Montespan, and some others. Why have the gentlemen and ladies of courts at the present day a better carriage, a more pleasing gait, and more graceful motions of all the limbs than persons of the middling or inferior classes? Solely and alone because their

attention is directed from their tenderest infancy to the accomplishments of which I am speaking, and models are pointed out to them for their imitation.

The productions of the needle are brought to a higher degree of perfection as articles for sale in England, France, Switzerland, and Holland, than in Germany. Nevertheless, in the latter, the girls of the middling and higher classes are more carefully instructed in all kinds of needle-work, and the German ladies display greater industry in these occupations than the females of any other country in Europe. It is, as far as I know, a practice peculiar to our countrywomen to take with them their materials for knitting or other work when they go into the company of their female friends and acquaintances; instead of playing with their fans, or chusing the useless as well as expensive amusement of unravelling gold and silver thread, with which not very long ago, ladies of rank and fortune, in France and England, and also in some parts of Germany, employed themselves. Upon the whole the more common works, such as sewing, knitting, spinning, and the making of apparel ought to be preferred to

the finer, such as the making of bone and thread-lace, tambour-work, embroidery and the like; not only because the former are more useful, but because they are less liable to excite a passionate fondness for pursuing them: in which case such works may easily prove injurious to the eyes, or even to health in general, and produce a neglect of other more necessary avocations. I should be misunderstood, were my fair readers to imagine that I would dissuade them entirely from the finer works, or that I should discourage in every case, a decided partiality for them. Who could find fault with females possessing talents and industry, for indulging so innocent a passion, if a natural taste be combined with extraordinary skill, and can be gratified without prejudice to health, and without neglecting more important duties?*—

* Since the art of painting with the needle was discovered it is probable that no female hand has produced such masterpieces as the lady of our councillor of state, M. Schlözer. The heads and groups, in the performances of this great artist, possess in the opinion of connoisseurs, such excellence, not only in respect to composition and design, but also in point of colouring, which it is extremely difficult to attain, that, at a little distance, the best eyes would take them for real paintings by celebrated masters. These *chefs d'œuvres* are the more worthy of admiration, as their author is a proficient in several other arts, and at the same time fulfils the duties which the several characters of wife, mother, and mistress of a family impose.

Many of my readers will probably be surprized that I should recommend spinning as a very useful employment. My reasons for so doing are deduced from a multitude of observations which I have had occasion to make for a long series of years. Ladies accustomed to an active life, may have the misfortune to lose their husbands, and with them a great portion of their pleasures, especially their domestic conversations and employments. At the same time the sight or health may be so far impaired as to prevent them from reading or going abroad into company and partaking of other diversions, so much as formerly. Under these circumstances it is fortunate if females possess inclination and talents for works that are not too fine, and require no extraordinary exertion, with which they may shorten and vary the long solitary days, and tedious evenings.* Miss Wollstonecraft expresses herself with great acrimony against the making of "caps, bonnets, and the whole mischief

* A new kind of work among the women of England is the sewing together of smaller or larger patches of printed cotton, at random. With this patch-work they make counterpanes and covers for chairs. It is scarcely possible that good taste will suffer this whimsical fashion to continue for any length of time.

of trimmings." * It is certain that some women employ their talents in this way to gratify excessive luxury and a ridiculous love of fashion. In this, however, as in other things, the abuse does not annihilate the utility. I consider the practice of teaching girls to make their apparel, which has within these few years been adopted, as a very important improvement in female instruction. How could many fathers of numerous families make their incomes suffice, if they were obliged to pay milliners and mantua-makers, for all the alterations which their wives and daughters chuse to make in their gowns, caps, and attire in general? Every saving that can be made in a family by the exertion of industry and skill becomes daily of more and more consequence.

A still more important science than any of those to which I have already alluded, and even than any other accomplishment which can adorn the person or the understanding of a woman, is that of domestic economy. In the higher and

* P. 165.—"The conversation of French women is frequently superficial; but I contend that it is not half so insipid as that of those English women, whose time is spent in making caps, bonnets, and the whole mischief of trimmings."

highest ranks, it has been customary from time immemorial, throughout almost all Europe, to relieve the mistress of the house entirely from the necessity of attending to the family concerns, by means of a number of domestics. But if these domestics are not judiciously chosen and sufficiently looked after the consequence is, that families possessing princely revenues are involved, by the negligence of the masters and mistresses, and by the dishonesty, ignorance, and prodigality of the servants, in more than princely debts, and, like the majority of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian nobility, are obliged to starve almost the whole year in the interior of their palaces. Opulent merchants, tradesmen, and others likewise have it in their power to exonerate their wives from the burdens of domestic affairs by having stewards, housekeepers, and cooks of both sexes. But could we even presuppose, as we unfortunately cannot, that all these substitutes perform the duties of their situations with the same fidelity and care as an intelligent and industrious mistress; still, is not every unnecessary augmentation of a family attended with an increase of its expences, and might not the money

be applied to a better purpose? The prices of all the articles of life are continually advancing, and the salaries of place-men and persons in various situations remain the same, or at least are not raised in the same proportion as the necessity or occasion for expence increases. How would men with a moderate income and a numerous family be capable of living in a style suitable to their rank were they not saved from ruin by the most economical management on the part of their wives in the domestic concerns? Thus it appears that the existence and welfare of hundreds, nay thousands of families depend in all places on the prudence and attention of the mistresses. Is it not then unpardonable negligence and error in mothers not to make their daughters pay an early and serious attention to the management of a house, from an idea that they are too good for such occupations, that they will be able to dispense with the knowledge which these require from the advantageous matches which their beauty or talents will not fail to ensure? Is it not an inexcusable folly in young females who are not very rich themselves, and probably will not obtain husbands with large for-

tunes, to disdain the offices of domestic economy as low and menial employments? Such silly creatures ought to be punished with the contempt of all rational people, and thus reminded of their duty. In the present state of things it is very rarely the case, that young married people of the middling classes have, at the commencement of their union, such an income as to support the expence that would accrue from the ignorance and inexperience of the mistress of the family, without running into debt, and thus involving themselves in misery for the greatest part of their lives. In most matrimonial connections it may be assumed, that to the income of the husband must be added the utmost frugality on the part of the wife, to enable them to live with decency. A young man, therefore, who intends to marry, and has not a sufficient fortune to keep servants to perform all the duties incumbent on the mistress of a family, ought, above all things, to enquire whether his intended partner understands the management of the domestic concerns, and is disposed to undertake it. Without this beauty and virtue, understanding and knowledge, are insufficient. If a wife gives herself no concern about either

the kitchen or the cellar, the pantry or the table; either about the linen or the furniture, the culinary or other utensils; if she does not know when and at what prices the articles necessary for housekeeping should be bought in; how and at what seasons to make pickles and preserves; how to keep and to examine books of housekeeping and accounts; this neglect and this ignorance are productive of circumstances more or less provoking and vexatious, which at length dispel the charm of the most ardent passion in the husband. Sometimes it is the dishonesty or carelessness of servants, at others the discovery of unnecessary waste through mismanagement, that disturbs the peace of the house or the happiness of the conjugal union.

The mistress of a family, indeed, is not required to be either a cook or a housemaid. But if the circumstances of the husband do not permit him to keep a professed cook of either sex, or he is unable to meet with either one or the other; the mistress of the house ought at least to understand enough of cookery to instruct a kitchen-maid to send up in a proper manner all the common dishes that are required for the family. In men

of letters and men of business the faculties, health, and capacity for exertion are much more intimately connected with a good kitchen than is commonly supposed. The lives of many men have been saved or prolonged by the skill and attention of their wives; others, on the contrary, have been plunged into an untimely grave, or at least their health has been ruined by the unskilfulness of their consorts. It is an art of the highest importance throughout life to know how to prepare simple dishes in such a manner as at once to excite and gratify the appetite of men who lead a sedentary life, and not to oppress or utterly destroy the powers of digestion. When passionate lovers kiss the delicate hands, or the blooming cheeks of the fair objects of their affection, and in their transports vow that neither shall ever again be prophaned by the fire, the smoke and the duties of the kitchen, the least that can be said of them is that they know not what they are doing, and women of sense ought immediately to decline the intended honour.

Among the fine arts in which persons of the female sex are instructed, none is of so much real utility to a woman as the noble, if not *fine* art of domestic economy.

A woman may be extremely amiable and respectable, without being a proficient either in drawing, singing, or music in general. Among the last-mentioned accomplishments, drawing upon the whole deserves the preference, unless a person possesses extraordinary talents for music. Girls ought to receive instructions in drawing, even though their taste may not lie that way, because an acquaintance with its principles exercises through life a favourable influence in the choice of the patterns of articles of furniture, and dress. Drawing in crayons, and painting in oil-colours, or in miniature, should only be encouraged when a girl is powerfully and almost irresistibly impelled by her genius to the study of any of those departments of the art. It is only upon the same condition that the playing upon any musical instrument should be approved. A moderate proficiency is soon lost for want of practice in the first years of marriage, and with it all the time and trouble that have been expended in its acquisition. On the contrary, a thorough acquaintance with any instrument, may, after it has long been suspended, be again renewed, and produce pleasing fruits even in advanced age. With sing-

ing the case is very different from instrumental music. A naturally agreeable and flexible voice may, without much expence of time and trouble, be so far improved as to afford very great pleasure in the domestic circle, or in the more numerous company of friends and acquaintances.

In none of the countries of polished Europe, where attention was paid to the education of girls, did people ever take more pains to instruct them in foreign languages, or bestow less trouble to give them a sufficient knowledge of the grammar and orthography of their mother-tongue than in Germany. The latter defect is much more censurable than the former attainment is praise-worthy. How small is the number of females who are taught to speak and write their native language correctly! Their ignorance of the grammar and orthography of their mother-tongue is the principal reason why so few of our German ladies make themselves perfect mistresses of other languages. French was never so generally taught as at present. The French language has hitherto deserved this preference for many reasons; but it appears doubtful to me if this will be the case

twenty years hence. If the daughters of people of rank and fortune possess talents for the acquisition of languages I would recommend next to the French the English language in preference to the Italian, except for such as hope to attain a proficiency in the higher department of singing. It is much more common in England than in Germany for girls to study the learned languages, or at least Latin. In Germany the knowledge of Latin attaches to women the unenviable character of pedants. In fact nothing but extraordinary circumstances can excuse a female for bestowing on the acquisition of a dead language so much time as is necessarily required to read its productions with ease and pleasure, and to relish their beauties. In the sixteenth, and the first half of the seventeenth century, the state of things was widely different. The modern languages were at that time unpolished and had produced very few master-pieces. If, therefore, women of genius were desirous of cultivating their understandings and their hearts, they were necessarily obliged to learn the ancient languages, in whose works alone they could find the sum

total of all useful and ornamental knowledge.

All parents who are desirous of giving their children a good education wish their daughters to cultivate the *belles lettres*, and all girls who would be thought well educated should think it a disgrace to be unacquainted with the works comprehended under that denomination. The *belles lettres* of every nation comprize all the literary productions, the principal object of which is to afford the heart and understanding salutary or innocent pleasures, or which are rendered equally fascinating by the beauty of the language, and by the importance and utility of the subject. To the *belles lettres*, therefore, belong the works of all the best poets, and among the poets also those of the best novel writers, those of all the good orators and historians; finally, the best voyages and travels, and the productions of all such moral and political writers who have gained admiration by the beauty or originality of their style, as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Helvetius, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Möser, Lichtenberg, &c. How few females have time and inclina-

tion to make themselves acquainted with the polite literature of only one polished nation; and this being the case, is it not an important question which they ought to ask themselves, or their parents, teachers, or husbands, which branches of the *belles lettres* are most deserving of cultivation, or from which the purest pleasure and the greatest advantage are to be derived? It is a lamentable truth that the public in general, and young people of both sexes in particular, are much more anxious to read new books than good ones; that they prefer the wretched or middling productions of the day to the best works of earlier date; and that by this indiscriminating rage for novelties they very often turn their heads and not rarely corrupt their hearts. This excessive hankering after what is new has multiplied the number of book societies and circulating libraries. But these very institutions have incontestably contributed, and still contribute to corrupt the taste of the public, and both ought, therefore, to be subjected to more precise regulations than they have hitherto been.*

* The proprietor of every circulating library ought, for instance, to be obliged to keep the best works, and such as are of the most general interest, that readers might at least

Till this shall be done, parents, teachers, and superintendents of children and young people, should seriously remind them, that it is of little consequence whether they read many books, if they make a point of reading good ones; that, even in perusing the latter, a certain plan ought to be followed; and that, of all vanities, the most contemptible is, to pique themselves on reading or being the first to read every new publication.

Of all the fashionable works comprehended under the denomination of *belles lettres*, none are perused with such avidity, by the youth of both sexes, as novels. From the observations of many years, I am obliged to give it as my opinion, that unmarried females ought either to be allowed to read no novels, or that only such should be put into their hands which delineate the manners of whole nations, of particular classes of society, and of particular periods, or very remarkable characters, or which satirize prevailing follies and prejudices, as the

have their choice between good and bad. The circulating libraries are the principal customers for novels. A stop would be put to the reading, and consequently to the writing, of so many wretched productions of that class, if the circulating libraries were prohibited by law to lend out any novels, till they had been published a year.

works of Cervantes, Le Sage, Smollet, Fielding, Voltaire, &c. For unmarried females who are desirous of keeping their imaginations and their hearts as untainted as their virgin innocence, I should forbid the perusal of all other novels, without exception. The most dangerous are undeniably those which depict the pleasures of sensual love in "words that burn," and which cannot fail to inflame the youthful mind; which represent love as an irresistible passion, and soften or embellish its frailties with such art, that its dishonoured victims not only excite pity, but almost command admiration and imitation. Those must have but little experience of the world, who have not seen one or more instances of infatuated females who have sacrificed the happiness of their whole lives to the silly notion of the irresistible power of love, impressed at the same time with the idea, that the world could not but forgive ladies possessing such extraordinary talents, attainments, and virtues as they did, the aberrations of omnipotent love. As these pernicious publications destroy the morals of females, so the novels of Richardson's school, in which we find ideal models of love and lovers, pervert the under-

standing. How many fair enthusiasts of weak heads and soft hearts, have taken Richardson's heroines for their patterns; how many have sought heroes like his with all the ardour of the most passionate love, and have, at last, been most miserably deceived; either because they could never find such objects as they were in quest of, or imagined for a time that they had actually discovered them. If I may be allowed to give my opinion of the not inconsiderable number of the common run of novels, which I have taken the trouble to look at, when strongly recommended for perusal; they either offend against geography and history, or the daily experience of men and things, or so grossly violate all the laws of probability, that persons who make these works their ordinary amusement, must fill their heads with false notions, and half-true or mutilated facts, and be rendered almost wholly unfit for the accurate observation of mankind and of human affairs. The most extensively mischievous effect produced by the predilection for novels, is, doubtless, that those who accustom themselves to this kind of reading cannot at length dispense with it, and either conceive an indifference or an aversion to all

other good books: if they cannot procure novels of some merit, they put up with inferior, and even the vilest performances. They execrate the miserable trash, and yet turn over one leaf after another till they get to the end, or at least till they see how the story terminates. How much greater is the pleasure as well as the profit derived from reading, by those who dedicate their leisure hours to the perusal of the works of the best poets and travellers, of the best historians and biographers, and the best memoirs of their own and other nations! The sex will not attain that degree of intellectual cultivation of which it is susceptible, till females of every description, relinquishing unwholesome novels, acquire a taste for a more salubrious, and, at the same time, more palatable food for the mind. . .

Many females are not content with cultivating those talents and accomplishments which are necessary to render them intelligent wives, mothers, and mistresses of families, or agreeable and entertaining companions. It is not sufficient for them to enter the temple of art by the side of their husbands: they are anxious to penetrate into the inmost sanctuaries of

the sciences. "We are not destined," say they, and with truth, "merely to delight the senses of men in this world. Our spirits are immortal as well as theirs. Why should we not, with the aid of genuine science, attach wings to these our immortal spirits, with which we may soar even in our present state, into more elevated regions, and once wing our flight to better worlds, to rejoin the souls of our much-loved husbands and sons?"

With the warmest advocates and panegyrists of the female sex, I agree that women ought not to be unconditionally excluded from any thing that is great or good, that can amend the heart or improve the understanding. There have been at every period, and there always will be certain individual females, who feel a repugnance to the pleasures and duties of matrimony, and who endeavour to compensate for these pleasures and these duties, which they cannot enjoy and fulfil, by indulging other human affections, and by the exercise of benevolence. There have been, and always will be women of masculine understanding and masculine dispositions, who even know how to combine the duties of their sex with pursuits of a superior cast to the

employments usually assigned them. It would be cruel to prevent the gratification and exercise of any natural, though, perhaps, uncommon, propensity, or talent. Many women have distinguished themselves by the cultivation of the higher departments of mathematics, of jurisprudence, divinity, and philosophy. Why then should not others be capable of applying themselves with equal success to the study of any other science, for which they possess a predilection and abilities?

But because certain individuals of the other sex of uncommon talents, and under extraordinary circumstances, have gained a free access to all the branches of human knowledge, we are not, by any means, to infer, that women in general, ought to study all the sciences as well as men. With respect to women in general, that is, such women as have neither extraordinary abilities, nor any wish to quit the sphere in which their sex was designed to move: the circle of the sciences adapted for them is much smaller than for men, who dedicate their lives to the sciences themselves, or are destined for offices and professions which require profound knowledge and extensive attain-

ments. It is but empty sophistry or declamation, to insist, because women have rational and immortal souls as well as men, upon a perfect equality in the education of the sexes, as not only the duties, but the faculties of the one are so widely different from those of the other.*

If females of the higher and middling classes have leisure and inclination for scientific pursuits, those which ought chiefly to be recommended to their attention, are geography, the modern history of the principal European states, popular metaphysics and morality, the truths of natural religion, as illustrated by a Reimarus, a Mendelssohn, a Jerusalem, and other writers, and, finally, those interesting parts of natural philosophy, and natural history, which may be acquired and taught without any profound mathematical knowledge, or the fatiguing study of a systematic nomenclature.

* In no part of Miss Wollstonecraft's publication are there such absurdities as in that where she proposes that boys and girls should be educated in the same schools, and that the latter should be instructed as well as the former in the elements of anatomy and medicine, "not only to enable them to take proper care of their own health, but to make them rational nurses of their infants, parents, and husbands; for the bills of mortality are swelled by the blunders of self-willed old women, who give nostrums of their own, without knowing any thing of the human frame."

Though I recommend these sciences to the attention of well-educated women, in general, I am far from insisting that all of them should be studied by every female: it is sufficient if out of the number, they chuse one friend of their leisure hours, and one companion for life. All of them afford, in a greater or less degree, three important advantages; they procure not only an innocent, but likewise an agreeable and useful pastime; they fit women for the company of well-informed men, and for a participation in serious conversation; finally, they improve the heart, or, at least, exercise and strengthen the understanding; and the benefit of these last-mentioned effects, is felt, not only at the present moment, but in all the circumstances that may occur in every period of life. All the sciences which I have recommended possess so many charms, that when a woman has once made some progress in them, she will find no difficulty in renouncing the frivolous, and often tasteless playthings of literary fashion.

Never did the character of a female pedant incur greater odium than at the present day. One of our most celebrated writers, who was always a warm ad-

mirer of the fairer half of the human race, and was long one of its greatest favourites, recently implored heaven to deliver Europe, among other calamities, from that of pedantic women. The more general and inveterate the hostility against female pedants becomes, the more accurately we ought to determine the signification of the term, that we may not be guilty of injustice, or censure those who are deserving of commendation. If the appellation of a female pedant be a term of reproach, it cannot possibly be applied to any of those females, who, from their earliest infancy, have assiduously cultivated every branch of useful and ornamental science, to enable them the better to fulfil the duties of their sex; even supposing that their attainments surpass in extent and intrinsic value those of many professed literati. Neither can we include among the pedantic women, those persons of the other sex, who devote to the arts and sciences, all the time and faculties which they have at their disposal, either because they have weighty reasons for declining the duties of mothers, wives, and mistresses of families; or, perhaps, because they are in such a situation as to be able to

relinquish the greater part of the conjugal, maternal, and domestic duties to persons on whose fidelity they can rely. Who can find fault with the many illustrious and noble females of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, who applied themselves with the greatest zeal to the study of the arts and sciences, who patronized artists and men of letters, and at the same time proved excellent sovereigns, or intelligent advisers of sovereigns, affectionate wives, and tender mothers? Female erudition is not unnatural, neither can it be a just subject of reproach, except when it causes women to neglect the duties incumbent on them, in the characters of wives, mothers, and mistresses of families. The censure incurred in such cases by erudition, is only mitigated, not obviated, when learning is combined with the most unassuming modesty; when females dedicate themselves to the arts and sciences, not from vanity, but an irresistible impulse of the mind; when they rather endeavour to conceal than to obtrude this propensity on the world. So much the more contemptible are those silly creatures, who, from motives of female vanity, aspire to masculine erudition, or merely to the appearance of it, and who,

for the sake of this tinsel or false parade, make no scruple to neglect their husbands, children, and domestic concerns. Most of the female pedants are very far from possessing real erudition. Which of us does not know female idiots, who admire in themselves a certain acquaintance with novels, poetry, and other fashionable publications, as the height of literary attainments; and on account of their supposed erudition, despise the most worthy persons of their sex, who have had less reading than themselves? What man of letters of any reputation is there, whose society is not courted, nay, who is not almost persecuted by them, merely that they may have an opportunity to retail their profound knowledge? What celebrated author has not heard or read the pretty patch-work language, which these would-be literary females compose with great labour, of fashionable words and technical expressions?—The most dangerous companions for such conceited creatures are mere men of letters, who are flattered with the attentions and admiration of women of rank and beauty; and who, in return, make their female admirers the confidants of their literary secrets, and umpires of the new produc-

tions of their genius. When female pedants thus become associated with one or more mere men of letters, their sober reason is, in general, perverted for the remainder of their lives, and even a second Moliere would find it impracticable to cure their sickly hearts and understandings. I am acquainted with men, who, though warm admirers of the sex, yet in the society of pedantic women, who are proud of their attainments, and pique themselves on their erudition more highly than on the fulfilment of the most important duties, experience such disgust, that they are ready to forget the indulgence due, without exception, to the foibles of women not addicted to any vice. In fact, female pedants are so insupportable, and at the same time so mischievous, that their follies form a standing character in all the theatres of all polished nations, and ought to be chastised with the keenest lash of satire, till the whole generation is utterly exterminated.

The cultivation of the sex among the aboriginal nations of Europe, scarcely differs so much as the condition of unmarried females, and the relations between daughters and mothers. In the south of Europe, and even in France,

girls were heretofore confined either in convents or in the houses of their parents. So far from partaking in the pleasures of their mothers, they were never or but seldom suffered to quit their prison. Their captivity was terminated only by marriage, a period whose arrival was most impatiently desired, because they were then released from a state of servitude and painful privations, and acquired perfect liberty together with the enjoyment of long expected pleasures. In the north of Europe, young unmarried females were never so closely confined, or so cruelly cut off from all the joys of life, as in the southern regions. Even among the people of the north we find striking differences, in the condition of unmarried females and the relations between daughters and mothers, among which, for want of accurate observations, I shall confine myself to those which I think I have perceived in the south and north of Germany. In the south of Germany, much less respect and attention is paid to young unmarried women than in the north; neither are they such inseparable companions of their mothers in the former as in the latter. If, however, they accompany their mothers in socie-

ties, they never presume to take part so freely in the conversations of female circles, as they do in the northern provinces. Persons of the other sex take little or no notice of them, but direct all their attention to the married women. Unmarried females are much more rarely admitted to card-parties in the south than in the north; and even at balls the former have a greater preponderance than the latter. At the courts, the oldest ladies and those of the highest rank expect the young gentlemen to pay more attention to them than to unmarried females possessing all the attractions of youth and beauty. The equality, or rather, the trifling inequality which prevails among the married and unmarried females of the north of Germany is much more natural. The same thing, however, cannot be said respecting the preponderance which the latter acquire in all places which there are many independent men, who have no occasion to respect the laws of etiquette, or to follow any other rule than their taste, and in doing this, prefer young and beautiful unmarried females to the married in all companies devoted to social pleasures; if for no other reason, at least for this,

because they are laid under less restraint by the former. This preponderance of the junior part of the fair sex is not only prejudicial to themselves but also to the youth of the other. These become habituated to a tone of familiarity or confidence, which, in the sequel may involve them in very disagreeable circumstances, if not relinquished in time. Young females to whom continual preference is shewn, are apt to imagine themselves of more consequence than those who are neglected, or at least that youth and beauty deserve to be more highly valued than all other female accomplishments put together.

It may be with truth asserted that women are objects of less adoration but of greater respect in the north than in the south of Europe. The Spaniards and Italians, from distrust of the virtue of their wives, confined them like slaves till the commencement of the eighteenth century; and if at the present day they allow them unbridled liberty, it is not in the confidence that their emancipated women will make a good use of that liberty, but in compliance with the commands of all-powerful fashion. The southern nations of Europe deem women

incapable of performing the most common domestic duties. How then could they ever think of consulting them on important concerns either of a private or of a public nature, or of conversing with them on literary topics? Among these same nations, though the cicisbeos adore their ladies like goddesses, or wait upon them as slaves upon their mistresses, yet women are treated both in word and deed as though they were destitute of all sense of morality, and female virtue. Real veneration was not always felt for the deities to whom exterior respect was paid by genuflexion and prostration. In the age of chivalry the ostentatious service of the ladies was very seldom accompanied with genuine regard. Who, finally, does not know that the most gallant men, among the nation most famed for its gallantry, felt the very least respect for the sex which they deceived and abused.

I would rather venture to decide among which of the polished nations of the north of Europe women deserve the greatest respect, than where it is actually paid them. The extraordinary attention and regard shewn by the Dutch and English of all classes, even by the lowest of the populace, for pregnant wo-

men is equally striking and honourable. Among the once free and independent Dutch, it was no sooner known that a woman was likely to become a mother, than she was considered as a saint, whom all endeavoured as much as possible to please and to spare every inconvenience that lay in their power. When a pregnant lady appeared in company, all were anxious to anticipate every wish, and to distinguish her from all the other females by uncommon attention. The husbands were most indefatigable in their solicitude to please. Even those who, previous to marriage, had not been the most ardent of lovers, proved during the pregnancy and confinement of their wives so much the more tender husbands. From the modesty, good sense, and moderation of the Dutchwomen, the willingness of their husbands to comply with all their wishes was seldom or never abused.

In England a thunderbolt itself would not clear a way through the thickest crowd so instantaneously as the shriek of a pregnant woman. There have been instances that when the furious populace have begun to destroy the house of a person obnoxious to them, they have im-

mediately desisted on being informed that a woman in child-bed or a new-born infant would be involved in danger by the prosecution of their rage.*

Among no nation of Europe did, or yet does the weaker sex enjoy equal civil rights with the stronger; either in respect to inheritance or succession, or the management and disposal of property; and still less in regard to the administration of justice or the participation in the legislative and executive power. The rights of women have not only varied in all ages among the different nations of our division of the globe, but even in the same nation at different periods. I cannot be expected to enter into a circumstantial detail of the changes which have taken place in the rights of women among the principal nations of Europe, and still less to investigate minutely whether and in what degree they are allowed too much in one place and too little in another. I shall therefore be content with directing the attention of the reader to the most remarkable revolutions, singularities, and contradictions in the rights of women; premising as

* *Archenholz*, vol. II. part I. p. 425, 6.

my opinion that all the restrictions upon the sex, in which the most generous and enlightened nations have for ages coincided, tend not to oppress but to promote the real welfare of women; that it would therefore be doing them a disservice to attempt to level the barriers erected in their favour, to confer on them privileges which for their benefit are withheld, and to render that equal which is made unequal by immutable Nature herself.

It was a principal and fundamental law of the ancient Germanic nations, that women could not possess any family estate, and in the sequel any fief, in right of property, because they were unable to defend either the one or the other against the enemies of their country. The same weakness of the sex which excluded women from the succession to landed estates, likewise incapacitated them for the princely dignity, as long as its only prerogative consisted in the rank of commander in chief in time of war, and ceased in time of peace. But when this dignity was made perpetual in peace, as well as in war, and was held for life or rendered hereditary; when the princes were not only generals, but likewise possessed

the supreme judicial authority, and often appointed officers to command their armies in their stead; females were admitted to the sovereignty by all the German nations. The females of the ancient Germans received no dowry on their marriage, from their fathers or brothers; and after the death of the father, the sons divided the paternal estate to the exclusion of their sisters. Husbands settled on their wives a portion and jointure, both consisting of estates more or less valuable, of which, however, the wives or widows enjoyed only the use during their lives. After their death the property reverted to the families of the husbands.

This ancient law respecting women was abolished among all the Teutonic nations, when they had settled in the Roman provinces, and become acquainted with the Roman laws. They began with giving females a dowry which at first consisted only of slaves, horses, and other cattle. Not long afterwards they made their daughters co-heiresses, first in unequal and afterwards in equal parts with the sons. Bridegrooms and husbands soon imitated the liberality of fathers. In many countries a community of pro-

perty between husband and wife was introduced, and with it the anti-teutonic practice, that the survivor should inherit the joint estate. Females became heiresses and proprietors not only of family possessions, but likewise of fiefs. Even in those illustrious and noble families in which the ancient German law of succession was retained, privileges were granted to heiresses to which their remotest forefathers were utter strangers. It is certainly a question whether the German nations acted wisely in exchanging the practice of their ancestors for the Roman law. If the former were to be again restored, it is evident that many advantages would be gained by it, and many abuses suppressed. But, without an experience of many years, it is impossible to decide whether the ancient law be preferable to the modern, or *vice versa*. One circumstance which argues in favour of the innovations in the ancient Teutonic system is, that all the German nations not only adopted them but likewise retained them during the periods of the highest civilization.

No German nation ever treated their women and children so much like slaves as the Romans. The adoption of the

Roman law itself did not place daughters under the authority of their fathers, or subject wives to the control of their husbands to such a degree among any nation of Germanic origin, as among the Romans. Is it not then truly astonishing that the very nation which most obstinately resisted the introduction of the Roman law, as a despotic system, and which has long been celebrated for the beauty and the influence of its women ;— that this very nation, I say, should have adopted in their fullest extent the notions of the Romans, respecting the subjection of wives and their implicit obedience to their husbands! According to the English laws, married women are not only regarded as the property of their husbands, but as children who have no will of their own, or as slaves whose will must be subservient to that of their masters. An Englishman who is tired of his wife, may publicly sell her like any domestic animal, provided, however, he has her tacit consent to the bargain. So far are the English laws from allowing that a married woman has any will of her own, that when husband and wife are jointly concerned in the commission of any crime, the husband alone is liable to punishment. He

is likewise subject to arrests and prosecutions for the debts and misdemeanours of his wife. All these laws, which would appear to have been enacted to degrade the sex, have long encouraged the most baneful licences. Faithless wives have secretly contracted great debts to procure the confinement of their husbands, and even to get rid of them in a legal way. Others have married, or even purchased husbands, that the latter might languish in prison in their stead, and either to deceive them or their creditors. When the application of laws so widely differs from their intent, and when the spirit of the laws is so inconsistent with the way of thinking and manners of a nation; how can we appeal to such laws to demonstrate the slavery and oppression of the sex? All impartial observers assure us that in no country do the women possess more rational liberty, more consequence, more power over the hearts of their husbands, especially in the management of their domestic concerns, than in England. One single modern female writer is continually complaining of servitude, and expresses vague wishes that her sex might be made free, because it would then quickly become

wise and virtuous as men become more so.*

These complaints and wishes are entirely, or in a great measure, unfounded. The only law that very often proves injurious to the lower classes of English women, is that of the community of property, which not only allows debauched and brutal husbands to squander the fortune of their wives, but likewise give them a right to all that the latter acquire. Many witnesses of veracity, whose statements and opinions are quoted in the instructive History of the English Poor,† affirm that the authority of the husbands extends to all that belongs or is coming to the wives, and that it very frequently weakens or totally destroys the disposition of the latter to industry and frugality. This is certainly an evil, which it were to be wished did not exist. It must not, however, be forgotten, that debauched and brutal husbands are always in the minority, and that if the women are sufferers through them, they are on the other hand great gainers by the same law of community of goods, which not only gives them the possession of the property of

* *Wollstonecraft*, p. 406.

† *State of the Poor, by Sir F. M. Eden*, 3 vol. 4to.

their husbands, but likewise a participation in the fruits of their industry. The English laws are not only contradictory to the spirit of the people and to general practice, but likewise to one another. If they seem to deprive women of some of the rights which they enjoy among other polished nations, they likewise grant them privileges which are not allowed to females of any other civilized people. Where but in England do the laws permit wives to present their husbands immediately after their marriage with children, whom the men are obliged to acknowledge, though they may be able to prove they had no connection with their brides previous to their nuptials? Where else can wives, after their husbands have been absent one, two, or three years, bring them legitimate children; that is, provided the husbands have not been out of England, or have resided, as the law expresses it, *inter quatuor maria?* In very few other polished countries do females of the lower classes, who marry men of quality, partake of their titles, dignities, and other privileges; and still less do ladies when they marry persons of inferior condition retain their titles and rank, as in England.

Not long since females, as well minors as such who had arrived at years of discretion, took the liberty of eloping with, and marrying adventurers and fortune-hunters, without the knowledge and against the will of their parents. Fortunately for families this liberty has been curtailed. Who knows whether many female friends of liberty and equality, may not deplore the new fetters thus imposed!

It is a well-known proverb throughout all Europe, that England is the Paradise of women. In fact, the customs of the people of all classes in England are still more favourable to the sex than the laws. The English women superintend the education of their children and the domestic economy, with a fidelity that does them honour. They attend to the kitchen, to the cleanliness of the houses and apartments, to the furniture and linen, with a care and assiduity that are equalled in few countries and surpassed in none. In return, the men relieve them from all the drudgery, not only of rural but also domestic economy. Persons of the other sex are seldom or never obliged to assist in agricultural labours, in brewing or baking: even the milking of cows is in general performed by men. Hence it is

easy to conceive why the English country-girls are upon the whole more beautiful and more blooming than those of any other nation of the north of Europe; and why female servants are able to appear neater and cleaner than in other countries.

In the remote periods of antiquity, it frequently happened among the rude but generous people of our division of the globe, that whole nations, or princes and nobles, who could not otherwise adjust their disputes, selected virtuous and intelligent females for their umpires; and the same practice was retained in the middle ages. It was then customary for the wives, sisters, and daughters of emperors and kings, during the absence of their husbands, brothers, and fathers, to hold diets and to preside in them as the representatives of the absent princes.* The history of all the European nations presents us with examples of illustrious females, who in their own name, in that of their infant sons, or imbecile husbands, governed whole nations and kingdoms with admirable wisdom and energy, and for this reason, because they were not themselves governed by women. In remote antiquity, and in the middle ages, females frequently fought beside their

* *Mascovii Comment.* III. p. 85.

husbands and lovers, rouzed the drooping valor of desponding warriors; turned by their prowess the fortune of the day, and saved cities, provinces, and kingdoms. Even in our times the women of Switzerland fought for their liberty, or their ancient constitution, with the same heroic intrepidity as their husbands. Females of great genius and extensive attainments have given lectures on the most difficult sciences with as much applause and advantage as they were ever taught by men. "This being the case," say the friends of equality, "why are not women admitted to an equal participation in political privileges with the men? Why are they so unjustly excluded from the most important offices and the most respectable professions?"

Those must have reflected very little on the difference of the sexes, and have made very few observations who should infer from the examples of wise princesses, and of women celebrated in history for valor or erudition, that the female sex in general is equally capable of exercising all professions, and performing all the duties of peace and war, with the male.* But if the faculties of the body,

* Hippel, a German writer, author of a work on *Marriage*, and an *Essay on the Civil Reformation of Women*,

mind, and understanding of both sexes, were more equal than they actually are, the most superficial reflection must convince every one that either the men would be transformed into women, or that the women would be totally diverted from those objects for which nature designed them, if they were to possess equal rights with men, to exercise the same professions and to follow the same pursuits. What would become of human society, what would become of the happiness of families, if women, formed to bear, to suckle, and to bring up children, and likewise to manage the domestic concerns, were to leave their houses, their children, and their servants to take their seats with their husbands in the legislative assembly of the nation, in the courts of justice, and in the public offices, or even to join the army and encounter the dangers of war? It is nature herself and not the cruelty of men that has denied

goes still farther, and asserts that women would far surpass men, and that the state, the administration of justice, and the system of academical instruction, would be placed on a very different footing from what they are at present, if women possessed equal privileges with men. The latter of the above-mentioned works is such a tissue of shallow declamations and sophistries, that I must candidly acknowledge that I was heartily tired and disgusted before I had got through it.

them a participation in those rights, offices and pursuits from which they have been excluded in all ages among the nations of Europe.

Miss Wollstonecraft had some presentiment of the consequences that would ensue if her sex were to be admitted to the same political rights as the other. She had not, therefore, the heart to desire it. She only lamented that the governments of the European states did not provide such places as honest, independent women were capable of filling.* This charge is in the highest degree unjust. Are not worthy females employed in all countries as governesses, teachers, and assistants in establishments for education, in hospitals, work-houses, orphan-houses, and other charitable institutions?—What other public stations are there, I would ask, to which women could, consistently with

* P. 339. "Is not that government, then, very defective and very unmindful of the happiness of one half of its members, that does not provide for honest, independent women, by encouraging them to fill respectable stations?" What does this writer mean by "independent women?" Such as are unmarried, no doubt. How then can she assert that no provision has been made for the happiness of one-half of the community? If none but *independent* women are fit for respectable stations, are they to engage not to marry; or, if they do, are they to resign their situations? Besides, who can guarantee the state, that independent women shall not lose their independence without marrying?

the purposes for which they were designed, and with the public welfare, prefer as strong a claim as well-educated and well-informed men?

Though women are excluded from most of the principal offices and affairs, they have often had a great, and often but too great an influence on the appointment of persons to the one, and on the transaction of the other. Celebrated statesmen who perceived this dangerous influence, expressed a wish that it might be utterly annihilated.* The accomplishment of this wish is as impracticable, as, if feasible, it would be unjust and prejudicial. How is it possible to prevent princes, or other persons in power, their confidants and advisers from hav-

* See the commencement of Chapter VI. in Vol. II. of this work, and particularly the opinion of cardinal Richelieu, extracted from his *Testament politique*. With the sentiments of that statesman, those of the witty and gallant earl of Chesterfield perfectly coincide. He calls women grown children, and declares that he never met with an individual belonging to the sex that possessed sober good sense. In another place, he observes, that, from the want of a solid understanding, they are all more alike than men; and that vanity and love are their universal characteristics. *Letters*, I. 524. "I will add," says he on another occasion, "that no woman ever yet reasoned or acted long together consequentially; but some little thing, some love, some resentment, some present momentary interest, some supposed slight, or some humour always breaks in upon and oversets their most prudential resolutions and schemes."—II. p. 572.

ing wives, female friends or mistresses, to whom they may be tenderly attached; from consulting them on the most important subjects, and suffering them to acquire a decided ascendancy?

Let the influence of females on statesmen and public affairs, continue and even increase, if it be but acquired by a sound and cultivated understanding, by experience and knowledge of mankind, and by a heart fraught with sentiments of humanity. The greatest and ablest statesmen will never regret having consulted enlightened female friends on subjects upon which they are well-informed. The counsels of intelligent advisers of either sex are not commands that must be implicitly obeyed. Unfortunately the most powerful men have seldom consulted enlightened, experienced, and well-disposed females. They applied on the contrary to the young, the beautiful, and the ignorant, or to the crafty and the ambitious; and by such they suffered themselves to be enslaved. Myriads, nay millions of men then became the sport of the caprices and passions of women, and of all those who knew how to flatter those caprices and those passions. To destroy, if it were possible, this empire

of female caprices and passions, would be to render the most signal service to the whole human race. It is at least a cheering reflection that during the latter half of the eighteenth century, the ruinous ascendancy of women greatly declined; and we may justly hope that it will continue to decrease in the same proportion in which the men became more polished, the women more virtuous, and the public opinion more powerful and more deserving of respect.

At the present moment women have perhaps the least influence in the very country where they once ruled with the most despotic sway. The English were always dutiful subjects to their female sovereigns, but they never could endure the influence even of the wives, mothers, sisters, or daughters of their monarchs in public affairs without loud murmurs of discontent.* How much less would they have been able to bear the ascendancy of mistresses and other female favourites! The English abandon the entire management of the interior of their houses

* In 1770 Lord Camden complained, in parliament, of the influence of a certain illustrious female. He was called upon to name the lady, and he complied without hesitation.

and families to their wives. Respecting public affairs, on the contrary, they seldom converse with them and still more rarely consult them. The English think it advisable to check, rather than to encourage the influence of women on politics and statesmen. In the year 1784 the fair duchess of Devonshire canvassed in person for her favourite Fox, and even purchased votes with kisses when they were not to be obtained by other means. The English forgave her zeal, but so far were they from approving it that the example of a female, one of the most distinguished for rank and beauty, has never been followed by any of her fair countrywomen.

In Spain and Italy it might be supposed that the ladies are all-powerful, because all husbands are cicisbeos, and all cicisbeos are the slaves of their mistresses. Fortunately for both countries the Italian and Spanish women have hitherto been brought up in such ignorance, and given themselves so little concern about every thing except their own amours or those of their female acquaintances, that they never could acquire or exercise any powerful influence on public affairs. Ought we to congratulate our-

selves that in all polished Europe Germany is probably the country where the sex at present enjoys the greatest influence in other concerns besides those of domestic economy? I answer in the affirmative; if the German fair obtain the ascendancy not merely by their personal charms, or the abuse of those charms, nor solely by cunning and intrigues, but by superior qualifications of the understanding and of the heart.

The consequence or unimportance of women depend not only on their education and intellectual attainments, but likewise in a great measure on the social relations of the sexes: which relations may either tend to ennoble both sexes and to make them happy, or to deprave and render them miserable. How widely the descendants of the aboriginal nations of Europe differ from each other in this point! In Portugal the pleasures and advantages, as well as the inconveniencies and mischiefs of the unrestrained intercourse of the sexes are almost wholly unknown. The Portuguese women seldom see even their female relatives and friends, and still more rarely any men except their husbands and private gallants; and if they occasionally find their

way into large societies the want of interesting subjects renders the conversation so tiresome that it is scarcely possible to wait for the breaking up of such assemblies.* In Spain and Italy the relations between the sexes were not long ago on the same footing as in Portugal. Notwithstanding the liberty which the Spanish and Italian ladies have acquired, it is rather an appearance of sociability than the genuine tone of social intercourse, which prevails in both those countries. The sexes in Spain and Italy find daily, or at least frequent opportunities for meeting not only at the court and its levees, but likewise in the corsos or public walks; at the theatres and the assemblies, at balls and concerts; and finally at the casinos, though it should be observed that these last are peculiar to Italy.† All these companies and assem-

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 71.

† *Bourgoing*, II. p. 323, &c. *Piozzi*, I. p. 109. *Archenholz*, IV. p. 8, 61. *Moore's View of Italy*, I. p. 245, 381, 385. II. p. 389. *De Borch*, II. 83—85. *Marcard*, I. 280, 325, 328. M. von Archenholz has all observers of credit on his side, when he asserts that in Italy the genuine spirit of social intercourse is much less prevalent than in Germany and England. But when he adds, that in Italy there are no tea-parties, no societies, no clubs, no balls and pic-nics—in a word, none of the social amusements of other countries—this must be understood with certain modifications. *Conversazionis* are common enough in Italy; and if they are not so agreeable as the parties of other countries, the fault does not lie

blies are mere masses of people, where men and women meet, it is true, but where they are not united by any general spirit of social intercourse; but are on the contrary split into a number of enamoured couples, or solitary individuals. To the latter belong all the strangers of the male sex, who have no ladies to whose service they are particularly attached, and who are received with repulsive coldness, or even dismissed with haughty indignation by such females as are provided with cortejos, or cicisbeos. The strongest proof of the want of a disposition for social intercourse in Spain and Italy is, that excepting Milan and perhaps a few other cities of Lombardy, convivial dinner or supper parties are either unknown or extremely rare, and that the assemblies or *conversazionis*, as they call them, are still as dull and tedious in most parts of Italy as they formerly were. These conversazionis were most common at Rome previous to

in the ices and cooling liquors, which are the only refreshments given at them. There is no want of opportunities for social intercourse in Italy; but it is the spirit of sociability in which its inhabitants are deficient. M. von Archenholz relates, that at Venice it is not common for females to go to coffee-houses, IV. p. 61. Moore, on the contrary, in his *View of Italy*, and Brooke, in his *Observations*, p. 115, assure us that ladies go to coffee-houses as well as gentlemen.

those unhappy revolutions by which Italy has been convulsed. "It frequently happens," says Moore,* "that three or four or more of the nobility have these assemblies at the same time, and almost all the company of a certain rank in Rome make it a point, if they go to any, to go to all; so, although there is a great deal of bustle and a continual change of place, there is scarcely any change of company, or any variation in the amusement, except what the change of place occasions: but this circumstance alone is often found an useful accomplice in the murder of a tedious evening; for when the company find no great amusement in one place they fly to another, in hopes they may be better entertained. These hopes are generally disappointed, but that does not prevent them from trying a third and a fourth: and although, to whatever length the experiment is pushed, it always terminates in new disappointments, yet at last the evening is dispatched; and without this loco-motive resource I have seen people in danger of dispatching themselves.

"Having told you what five or six

* *View of Italy*, I. p. 381.

conversazionis are, I shall endeavour to give you some idea what one is. These assemblies are always in the principal apartment of the palace, which is generally on the second, but sometimes on the third floor. It is not always perfectly easy to find this apartment, because it sometimes happens that the staircase is very ill lighted. On entering the hall, where the footmen of the company are assembled, your name is pronounced aloud, by some of the servants of the family, and repeated by others as you walk through several rooms. Those whose names are not known are announced by the general denomination of *i Cavalieri Forestieri* or *Inglesi*, as you pass through the different rooms, till you come to that in which the company are assembled, where you are received by the master or mistress of the house, who sits exactly within the door for that purpose. Having made a short compliment there, you mix with the company, which is sometimes so large that none of the ladies can have the conveniency of sitting. Notwithstanding the great size and number of the rooms in the Italian palaces, it frequently happens that company are so pressed together that you can with

difficulty move from one room to another. There always is a greater number of men than women; no lady comes without a gentleman to hand her.

"At cardinal Bernis' assembly, which is usually more crowded than any in Rome, the company are served with coffee, lemonade, and iced confections of various kinds;* but this custom is not universal. In short, at a conversazione you have an opportunity of seeing a number of well-dressed people, you speak a few words to those you are acquainted with, you bow to the rest, and enjoy the happiness of being squeezed and pressed among the best company in Rome. I do not know what more can be said of these assemblies, only it may be necessary, to prevent mistakes, to add, that a great conversazione is a place where there is no conversation. They break up about nine o'clock, all but a small, select company, who are invited to supper. But the present race of Romans are by no means so fond of convivial entertainments as their predecessors. The magnificence of the Roman nobility displays itself now in

* According to the author of *Fragmente über Italien*, it has been customary, within these ten years, to serve the company at conversazionis with sherbet, I. p. 138.

other articles than the luxuries of the table; they generally dine at home in a very private manner. Strangers are seldom invited to dinner, except by the foreign ambassadors."

"The prodigious expence," says another traveller,* "incurred by single assemblies and the great number of useless and dirty servants that are kept do not permit in Italy those agreeable societies and *coteries* which in France and other countries constitute the greatest charm of life. It is in such societies only that life can be enjoyed, that instruction and amusement can be obtained. In the Italian conversazionis, on the contrary, people press and crowd and thrust against each other, or pay compliments and talk of the most indifferent matters, after which they return home yawning and exhausted.—Exquisite pleasure truly!

"Such is the tone that prevails in the societies of Palermo, and throughout all the rest of Italy. The only exceptions are a few houses, the owners of which have brought back from their travels besides other accomplishments the art of amusing themselves, which is not very

* *De Borch*, II. p. 82.

easily acquired. To these exceptions belong the assemblies of the viceroy at Palermo, and what is called the great conversazione. The latter is a kind of public coffee-house for the nobility, and for all the people of the city most distinguished for arts, science, and fortune. Foreigners are admitted in that quality to this conversazione. Nothing can be more agreeable and more convenient, not only for them, but likewise for the natives, than to meet the same company every evening, to converse on the subject of public affairs or private concerns, to form new acquaintances, and in a word, to amuse themselves. There is no master of the house, no etiquette to impose the least restraint. Perfect equality prevails. A billiard-table, a pharo-bank, and card-tables attract a considerable number of ladies and gentlemen. Most of them assemble in two elegant apartments, in which the pleasures of social conversation are preferred to all other amusements."—In these casinos people of the first distinction were so familiar with men of letters and artists, especially with celebrated actors and singers, as to give great offence to the count de Borch, and cause him to vent his indignation in a

manner at once ludicrous and severe.* Notwithstanding this familiarity, unequal marriages are still more extraordinary circumstances in Sicily than in the rest of the Italian states, or in any other country.† In Milan and other Italian cities it was as uncommon for nobles and commoners to meet together in society as to be united in marriage;‡ and yet at Milan occasions sometimes occurred in which all distinctions of rank ceased, and ladies and gentlemen of the highest quality danced with persons of the inferior classes; where high and low, laying aside all restraint, contributed by every possible exertion to the amusement

* II. p. 85. "There is no country in which the merit of artists is more duly appreciated than in France; but the distance which separates the man of rank from them an of talents. Here a singer, a musician in embroidered clothes, places himself beside a man of the highest rank: they *thou* one another, they laugh and jest together, and appear upon terms of the utmost familiarity. The *castrato* sits, when the gentleman frequently stands, and does not wait to cover himself till the latter puts on his hat. I have endeavoured to discover what could have given rise to conduct so irregular, and I think it ought to be attributed to the kind of respect which is here entertained for talents."

† *Piozzi*, II. p. 51.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 98—100. At Milan, at the time of Mrs. Piozzi's visit, it was deemed a prophanation of the word *dama*, lady, to apply it to the wife of a rich banker. Ladies of quality were distinguished from commoners by velvet stools that were carried before them to kneel upon, and by the arms which were worked upon the livery of their attendants.

of the company.* Upon the whole there is a greater number of societies, if not more genuine conviviality at Milan, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Palermo, than in the rest of Italy.† The dullest, or at least one of the dullest cities is Genoa, where cicisbeism is the most flourishing.‡

It has been shewn in the preceding volumes, how the art of social intercourse was first invented by both sexes in France, how it was improved and brought to perfection in that country, and how it finally corrupted both sexes by the pitch of extravagance to which it was carried. Time alone can shew how far the tempests of the revolution have been advantageous or detrimental to the spirit of society which formerly existed.

The intercourse between the sexes in England is as intimate as it can possibly

* Mrs. Piozzi witnessed a phenomenon of this kind, on occasion of a wedding.—I. p. 83.

† The author of the *Fragmente über Italien* prefers the Italians to all the other nations with which he was acquainted, for hospitality, and likewise in some respect for sociability. I. p. 113, 119. See the same writer concerning the casinos of Florence, I. p. 131.

‡ *Marcard*, I. 325—328. At Genoa, there was not more than one conversazione in a week, and that only during Advent and Lent. Modern travellers have thought even Turin a dull and unsociable place, compared with the great cities of Germany.

be, consistently with the genius of the people, and the political constitution of the country. The favourite amusements and pleasures of the English, hunting, horse-racing, and games of chance, political discussions and news, clubs,* and coffee-houses, the theatres and Vauxhall, the taverns and bagnios;† but above all, the prodigious number of kept women and public courtezans, among whom are some of the first-rate beauties in the kingdom,‡ draw the persons, or at least the hearts of the men from a regular and constant intercourse with women of character. § Even at dinner-parties, the sexes remain together only till the bottle begins to circulate. The women then

* Even unprejudiced Britons have observed, that the numerous clubs render England a *triste sejour* for foreigners, and that casinos or mixed societies deserve a preference to those composed only of men.—*Moore's View of France*, II. 327. *View of Italy*, II. p. 389.

† Beaumarchais observed, that more was squandered in one night in the bagnios and taverns of London, than would keep the Seven United Provinces for half a year. *Archenholz*, Vol. I. P. II. p. 388.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 377—384. Men of quality are not ashamed to appear in public with celebrated courtezans.

§ *Moore's View of Italy*, II. p. 401. "In England the spirit of play and of party draws the minds of the young men of fortune from love or gallantry: those who spend their evenings in a gaming-house, or in parliament, seldom think of any kind of women, but such as may be had without trouble; and, of course, women of character are less attended to than in some other countries."

withdraw,* and it is frequently the case, that the votaries of Bacchus reduce themselves to such a condition as to be unable to appear with decency at the tea-table. The English in the great towns dine too late to have any regular suppers, and for this reason the convivial and familiar evening repasts of other countries are unknown. Upon the whole, the English live too much abroad, and their wives too much at home, and both men and women are too fond of the places of public resort to admit of an intimate intercourse between persons of both sexes of polished manners and fair character. Men and women of rank and fortune pursue pleasure more eagerly in the capital than in other places.† They, therefore, go together, or, impelled by the same love of dissipation, they meet at assemblies, and at the theatres; at concerts, balls, and horse-races; at watering-places and in the public walks. But these places of

* *Archenholz*, Vol. II. Chap. XI. p. 403. The intemperance of the English is so well known, that there is no occasion to adduce witnesses to prove it. The bad example of the men likewise infects the other sex. In London you see more intoxicated woman than men. Even among the higher classes of English and Irish ladies, it is said to be nothing uncommon to be a little disguised with liquor. *Von Watzdorf*, p. 94, 95.

† *Wendeborn*, II. 309.

resort and diversion, in which great numbers of people meet to enjoy a certain kind of amusement, such as dancing, music, gaming, and continue together for hours, cannot be accounted in England, any more than in other countries, the seats and schools of good company, of the *bon ton* of society, or of lively, instructive, and interesting conversation. The most intelligent natives assign the comparative rarity of a familiar intercourse between the sexes as the reason that intrigues of gallantry occur seldom in England. "When they do," says Moore,* "they generally proceed from a violent passion, to which every consideration of fortune and reputation is sacrificed, and the business concludes in a flight to the continent or a divorce."

Among the Dutch, if we except the clubs frequented by the men, scarcely any of those obstacles existed which prevent the constant intercourse of the sexes in England; and yet familiar, mixed companies were less common in Holland than in Great Britain. It does honour to the Dutch females, that, in the situation in which they were heretofore placed, they were more lively, more con-

* *Moore's Italy*, II. p. 432.

versable, and more agreeable than the men.*

Most of the writers who have made the fair sex the subject of their investigations, have said a great number of fine things of women, but much less good concerning them, than a regard for truth obliges me to do † Thus for instance; it is adopted as a general and established maxim, that women are not susceptible of genuine friendship for persons of their own sex. I cannot possibly suppose that my friends and myself are the only fortunate mortals whose experience contradicts this assertion. Many are the examples of the warmest friendship that I have had occasion to observe between persons of the fair sex. With such examples before one's eyes, it is truly ridi-

* *Grabner*, p. 282.

† This particularly alludes to the author of the treatise *Ueber die Ehe (On Marriage)*, who has already been mentioned in a preceding note. This writer, though very often happy in his images, comparisons, and contrasts, is seldom correct and consistent in his deductions. He frequently pays such compliments to the women as they scarcely could have expected from their greatest flatterers, and immediately afterwards charges them with more bad qualities, and allows them fewer good ones than professed woman-haters themselves would have done.

‡ *Ueber die Ehe*, p. 323. "As far as relates to their own sex, they have not the idea of friendship: they hate each other; for they hate all excellence, from the apprehension of rivalship."

culous to read the profound deductions of all the causes which render women incapable of genuine friendship for other women; to see what anti-social and ferocious monsters have been depicted under the characters of female vanity, jealousy, and the other foibles of the weaker sex; to observe how little such writers imagine, that females can possess strength of understanding and firmness of mind, or be enabled by these to correct their own failings, and to acknowledge and duly estimate the excellencies of other women.

Miss Wollstonecraft charges her own sex with not sufficiently generalizing their observations.* With greater justice might she have accused ours of being too apt to generalize at the expence of hers. To these generalizations which contradict experience, belong also the common-place notions respecting female loquacity, inability to keep a secret, love of slander, and other foibles generally imputed to the other sex, on account of which a very mean opinion is entertained of companies and societies composed wholly of women. As there are places where even the men of the higher

* *Rights of Woman*, p. 115.

classes are so uncultivated, that, on the smallest difference of opinion, on the slightest collision in their official concerns and pretensions, they immediately break out into open hostilities, form parties, and endeavour to gain every person over to their side; so there are likewise many places in which the female sex has received so little polish, that public and private scandal constitutes the first and chief subject of their conversation, and ever-vigilant slander is the permanent order of the day. To my knowledge, however, there are towns where the superior class of men are as little addicted to party-spirit, as the better sort of women are given to slander and defamation; where they are totally silent respecting scandal, both public and private, or if they are obliged to speak on subjects of that kind, judge with lenity and indulgence of the faults and foibles of their fellow-creatures, and at the same time pay a just tribute to their merits and good qualities; instead of exaggerating the errors of others, and dwelling upon them with malignant satisfaction. Where such a tone prevails, slanderers of either sex, who are unable to bridle their tongues, incur contempt, or hatred, or both.

Having shewn my fair readers to the best of my ability, where they and their sisters are more or less beautiful, accomplished, and respected; I should be greatly surprized if they did not wish to know, in which regions of our division of the globe, the women are more or less happy, more or less virtuous, and as that also is an important subject, more or less fashionable. With the reply to these questions, I shall close my investigations relative to the sex.

In considering the more or less happy and comfortable situation of the sex in different countries, it is necessary at the outset to make a distinction between real and reputed, or apparent happiness. The real, and the imaginary happiness of women are often not only different but diametrically opposite to each other. The latter may exist without intellectual cultivation, without useful attainments, talents and occupations, without virtues, in a word without any of the requisites essential to real happiness. Women, as well as men, think themselves happy without actually being so; and both often deplore their condition when they are absolutely objects of envy.

The sluggish and secluded Portuguese

females probably think themselves happy in their prisons, if they can but loiter away life in listless indolence, reclined in their chairs or upon their sofas. The ignorant, unoccupied, intriguing Spanish and Italian women, doubtless deem themselves the happiest of the daughters of Eve, while they have no occasion to concern themselves about their husbands and their children; while they can have their cortejos and their cicisbeos, and pursue their pleasures without molestation. The vain depraved women of the ancient French court, ever gadding from home in the pursuit of gratification, thought no life worth living but that which they led, and imagined that happiness was to be found no where but in the polite, fashionable, and great world in which they moved. On the contrary, among those nations the women of which are the most polished, the most respected, and also the most worthy of respect, many of the sex probably think they have reason to be dissatisfied with the lot assigned them, and on account of a few inconveniences or disappointed wishes, to forget that they possess and enjoy more than millions of their sisters who deem themselves supremely happy.

Shall we suffer all these partly pleasing, partly painful, illusions to pass for reality; or may we adopt this as an incontrovertible principle, that women as well as men are in general the more happy the less they are deserving of happiness?

The Portuguese, the Spanish, and the Italian women, however happy they may fancy themselves in their indolence, their ignorance, and the indulgence of their vicious propensities, are, nevertheless, as far distant from real felicity as persons in the delirium of a fever or in a state of mental derangement, who rejoice in the imaginary possession of certain superior advantages. Continual sauntering without employment may by long habit become essentially necessary, but it can never be a source of genuine pleasures. Lassitude, ill humour, *ennui*, and all sorts of vicious passions, torment the indolent on the couch on which they repose their sluggish limbs: they protract the tedious hours to days, and lengthen out the slow-footed days to weeks and months. These disagreeable sensations are never dispelled or compensated by the acquirement of useful knowledge, by the exercise of useful talents, or by the production of useful works.—Many Spanish and Italian ladies would proba-

bly prefer the loss of life to the sacrifice of their cortejos and cicisbeos. Is this any proof that the supreme happiness of a women centres in a gallant? Without taking into account the bitter reproaches of conscience, the pleasures of illicit love are more than counterbalanced by the anxieties of various kinds with which they are attended; sometimes from the awaking jealousy of injured husbands; sometimes from the suspected infidelity or indifference of lovers; at others, from public rumours, or the silent opinions of the public. Supposing even, what is, however, impossible, that the pleasures of unhallowed love were not embittered by any of the painful feelings which are inseparably attached to them, who can deny that these pleasures are not to be compared with that heartfelt delight which a faithful wife and mother derives from the affection of her husband and children, and from the sweet satisfaction of knowing that she contributes to the happiness of both. The best of wives and mothers may, without any fault of her own, lose her fortune, her husband, her friends. Even then, an intelligent, industrious, and virtuous woman finds in her talents and attainments, her diligence, her virtues, and the re-

putation of those virtues sufficient resources to keep herself and her orphans from want. How forlorn, on the contrary, is, in such a situation, an ignorant, indolent and immoral woman! Misery and shame are the natural punishments of the idleness and irregularities of her past life.—Whatever estimate, therefore, silly females may form of the happiness of their condition, still it is an incontestable truth, that women, like men, are more truly happy and better able to encounter the storms of life, the more they have cultivated their heart and understanding, and thus rendered themselves competent to fulfil all their duties, to enjoy life in a rational manner, and to contribute to the felicity of others. If my fair readers recollect what I have already said concerning the cultivation of their sex, they will not be at a loss for an answer to the question: Where are women most happy?—They are most happy, where they are most accomplished and most industrious, where they possess the greatest variety of useful and ornamental attainments and abilities.

The true happiness of women is, however, not so much dependent on the cultivation of the mind, as on the disposi-

tion of the heart, or on their manners and the fulfilment of their duties: and I shall, therefore, subjoin some striking particulars relative to the sex among the polished nations of our division of the globe.

In Portugal, Spain, and Italy, women have so ardent a constitution, and so little instruction and employment, that it is impossible for the generality of them to keep their hearts uncontaminated, and to withstand the allurements of vice. But if daughters in Spain and Italy do not imitate the licentious example of their mothers so frequently as they do in Portugal;* still the young Spanish and Italian females are not more virtuous than the Portuguese. All of them are eager to be married, that they may gratify all their desires without check or molestation. In Portugal, Spain, and Italy, that sex which was formed by nature to wait with modest reserve for the solicitations of men, very often challenges them with the greatest effrontery to the conflict of love.† With the licentiousness

* *Tableau de Lisbonne*, p. 299.

† *Ibid.* p. 299. *Bourgoing*, II. 312—319. "Oui, la depravation dans ce genre est poussée, en Espagne jusqu'au scandale; et souvent le sexe, destiné par la nature à attendre le plaisir, le provoque avec effronterie."

of their lives correspond the obscene jests, songs, and stories, which in the north of Europe would offend and disgust the lewdest debauchees.* It would almost appear that nature herself had denied the females of the south of Europe that fascinating modesty which constitutes one of the principal charms of the fair natives of the northern regions.†

Chastity and modesty are not, it is true, the only female virtues, but they

* *Bourgoing*, II. p. 317. "J'en ai vu accueillir, se permettre même des propos, que les hommes peu scrupuleux auroient reservés pour orgies; chanter des couplets d'une indecence revoltante." Respecting the tone of the Italian females, see *Piozzi*, I. p. 84, 101, 109.

† This is a natural consequence of many customs prevalent in Spain and Italy. At Venice and in other cities of Italy, nay even in the country, it is very common for parents to sell their daughters, or at least their virgin honour. *Archenholz*, IV. p. 56. *Brooke's Observations*, p. 82, 152. In Rome, young females expose their charms all day at their windows. When one of them has ensnared a lover, the mother is made the confidante of her daughter's intrigue. *Archenholz*, IV. p. 225, 226. In the same city there are particular churches and masses, which are frequented by the fair and their admirers, and hence are the privileged rendezvous of love and gallantry. *Ibid.* p. 227. Unmarried females stand naked, as models for painters, without injury to their reputation. *Moore's View of Italy*, I. p. 449. It is a common practice throughout all Italy for grown daughters to sleep in the same bed with their parents, which is the more indecent as the Italians of both sexes retain no covering whatever in bed. It is not less common for the women of the lowest class in Naples to suckle the dogs of people of quality like their own children; and for girls in Sicily, who hide themselves when a strauger enters the house, to bathe in public, and afterwards to play and romp together for some time before they put on their clothes.—*De Borch*, II. 142.

may justly be called the only indispensable virtues of the sex, without which neither the women of whole nations, nor single individuals can deserve the reputation of morality and virtue. A woman who possesses no other recommendation than chastity may be a very disagreeable wife, a careless or cruel mother, a severe, niggardly or prodigal mistress of a family, and lastly an intolerable companion; while on the contrary, unchaste women have often united the rarest qualities of the mind, and even masculine virtues with irresistible personal charms. If, however, chastity be not a correct standard of the worth of individual females, it is a sure criterion of that of the sex in general among whole nations; or it may be adopted as an almost infallible principle, that the women of whole cities, or whole nations, are the more depraved, the less they attend to the duties of their sex, and the more prevalent among them is the want of chastity and conjugal fidelity.

There is less uniformity among the female sex in the north of Europe than in the south; because there is a much greater difference in the instruction and education of girls in the various coun-

tries and classes of society. We must in particular beware of forming a judgment of the manners of the sex in England by those of certain women of rank and fortune in the metropolis. London is the largest and the most opulent city, not only in Great Britain, but on the whole face of the earth, and, therefore, it is not matter of astonishment if the public courtezans of that capital are more numerous, more enterprizing and more artful; if many of the women of rank and fortune are more vain, more addicted to pleasure, more hard-hearted, and more immodest; nay even if many individuals of the middling and lower classes are more dissolute and corrupted than in other places. Notwithstanding this depravity, it must not be forgotten that immoral women even in London form but a small portion of the female inhabitants, that the women of the other towns, and in the country should not be judged by those of the metropolis; and that on the contrary morality, conjugal fidelity, and the domestic virtues are still common among the females of England. If the Englishwomen continue to cherish those virtues of the sex, and at the same time to improve them-

selves more and more in useful accomplishments and sociability, they will in future be much happier than they have hitherto been deemed.*

In Germany and among the northern nations of German origin, the highest and the lowest classes differ less from each other in respect to morals and attainments than in England, and especially in London. The highest and the lowest classes among us are likewise less depraved than in the British capital. It is nevertheless probable that morality, conjugal fidelity, and the domestic virtues are less common among the women of the middling classes in Germany than in England. If even our German females surpass the Englishwomen in cultivation and sociability, an important question which still remains to be decided is, whether the probable superiority in those respects be not more than counterbalanced by the probable inferiority in moral virtue.

The real happiness of the sex is still less dependent than its morals, on the variety and elegance of pleasures, as they are denominated by way of eminence.

* The same observation may be applied to the women of Holland.

It is impossible to multiply, and still less to diversify these amusements to such a degree, as to prevent them, even according to the concurrent testimony of the sons and daughters of pleasure, from losing the greatest portion of their charms. If people, regardless of the ends for which they received existence, renounce all serious and useful occupations, and make pleasure their only or principal pursuit; nature punishes this violation of her sacred laws by all the torments of languor and vacuity of heart. Upon the whole, no persons are less happy than those who, with the greatest eagerness run the giddy round of dissipation.* Habit renders these amusements the more necessary, the less pleasure they afford. How many people of the great world have complained that one of the greatest torments of life con-

* I cannot forbear introducing here an ingenious observation made by Moore, in his *View of Italy*, II. p. 197. "To a mere spectator the amusements of the common people afford more delight than those of the great; because they seem to be more enjoyed by the one class than by the other. This is the case every where except in France, where the high appear as happy as those of middle rank, and the rich are very near as merry as the poor. But, in most other countries, the people of great rank and fortune, though they flock to every kind of entertainment, from not knowing what to do with themselves, yet seem to enjoy them far less than those of inferior rank and fortune."

sisted in being obliged to take part in amusements which to them were wholly barren of delight! The diversions of the great world in the north of Europe, are beyond comparison better culculated to accomplish the ends for which they were designed than those of the southern regions. The corsos, the casinos, the theatres, and conversazionis of Italy, are in the opinion of all travellers, rather the sanctuaries of *ennui* than the temples of pleasure.

Fashion has a much more powerful influence on happiness and morals than the love of pleasure. I here consider fashion in the sole character of the legislatrix of dress, and the inventress of new forms and patterns for attire and personal ornaments; regardless whether and in what degree she presides over furniture and equipages, nay even over poetry, music, painting, sculpture and other departments of taste.*

* *Smith's Wealth of Nations*, III. p. 3. "Fashion is different from custom, or rather is a particular species of it. That is not the fashion which every body wears, but which those wear who are of high rank or character. Dress and furniture are allowed by all the world to be entirely under the dominion of custom and fashion. The influence of those principles is by no means confined to so narrow a sphere, but extends itself to whatever is in any respect the object of taste, to music, to poetry, and to architecture."

Nothing is more natural than that both sexes, especially the female, should endeavour, by means of dress, to set off personal charms and to conceal defects; nothing is more natural than that both men and women, particularly the latter, should change the fashions or the patterns of their attire and ornaments, partly for the sake of improvement, partly for the sake of novelty, because what is new at least attracts notice; finally, nothing is more natural than that the lower classes should imitate the higher, in dress as well as in other respects. Nothing, on the contrary, is more unnatural and unreasonable than that such a disproportionate value should be attached to the invention, nay, even to the early imitation of new fashions; that the lawgivers of fashion so often violate the rules of taste, of decency, of health, and its slaves blindly adopt the most absurd, indecorous, and unwholesome fashions; that many persons even make themselves unhappy if they cannot keep pace with all these changes, and would rather sacrifice their temporal welfare, their virtue and their peace of mind, than be outdone, in respect to fashions, by others of their own rank.

When new fashions are agreeable, and not injurious either to morals or to health, the authors of them may assume some small degree of merit for their inventions. This trifling merit is converted into a circumstance highly ludicrous, when people make the invention of new fashions their principal occupation; when they attach as much importance to changes in dress as to momentous affairs of state; when, from the rage for invention, or the desire of appearing lovely in a new way, they change the fashions so often and so abruptly as to create an expence insupportable to most families and ruinous to many.

But however solicitous people may be to do justice to the inventors and inventresses of new fashions, it is scarcely possible to conceive how persons whose heads are not as empty as their hearts are vain, can seek an honour in being the first to adopt indiscriminately, and without examination, every fashion, be it ever so ridiculous, indecorous, or unhealthy. I confess that I feel such indignation against these apes of fashion of both sexes, that I wish to express myself in the strongest language I can, that the look of contempt and the finger of scorn

may every where be directed to the fools to whom I allude. The German nation has distinguished itself above all others, by the number and utility of its inventions; and yet this ingenious nation for two centuries, blindly imitated the French fashions, and has for a generation past copied those of the English. Has then the spirit of invention abandoned the higher ranks, the patterns of fashion, or the artists of both sexes who are employed by the rulers of the mode? Our political constitutions, our governments and laws, our trades, arts, and sciences, and academical institutions, have ever had and still retain a German stamp: why then should not our attire and personal ornaments? Our artists have long been admired and rewarded throughout all Europe. The productions of our authors are read in all countries, and translated into all languages. All those who have hitherto been our rivals allow us the first place in most of the sciences—and shall we still continue to be servile imitators in the arts of dress? If, however, we can not or will not exercise our ingenuity in inventing, we ought at least to try the fashions of foreign origin before we adopt them. The inventors and in-

ventresses of new fashions suit them to their figure and size, to the colour of their complexion, eyes and hair, to their personal advantages and defects. Is it not then an almost unaccountable contradiction, to transfer costumes and dresses adapted to certain figures, sizes, colours, advantages, and defects, without alteration, to other persons, which, perhaps, so far from adorning, they only disfigure? If it be necessary to suit apparel to every climate, it is equally necessary in the eyes of rational people, that new fashions, not repugnant either to good morals or to health, should be modified according to the peculiarities of each person, as well as according to rank and age. This is actually done in such places where both sexes are highly polished, and where powerful examples do not command imitation. The more real cultivation advances among men and women, the more they will be convinced that every individual of sense, having a peculiar character and peculiar qualities of person, ought likewise to have a peculiar mode of dress adapted to his or her person; the more they will be ashamed of blind imitation in dress, as well as in other respects; the more they will despise the idiots who set

themselves up for patterns, because forsooth, they are themselves but servile plagiaries; and the more they will judge of the understanding and taste, especially of women, by their talent for adapting the forms, stuffs, and colours of dress to their persons, their rank, and their age.

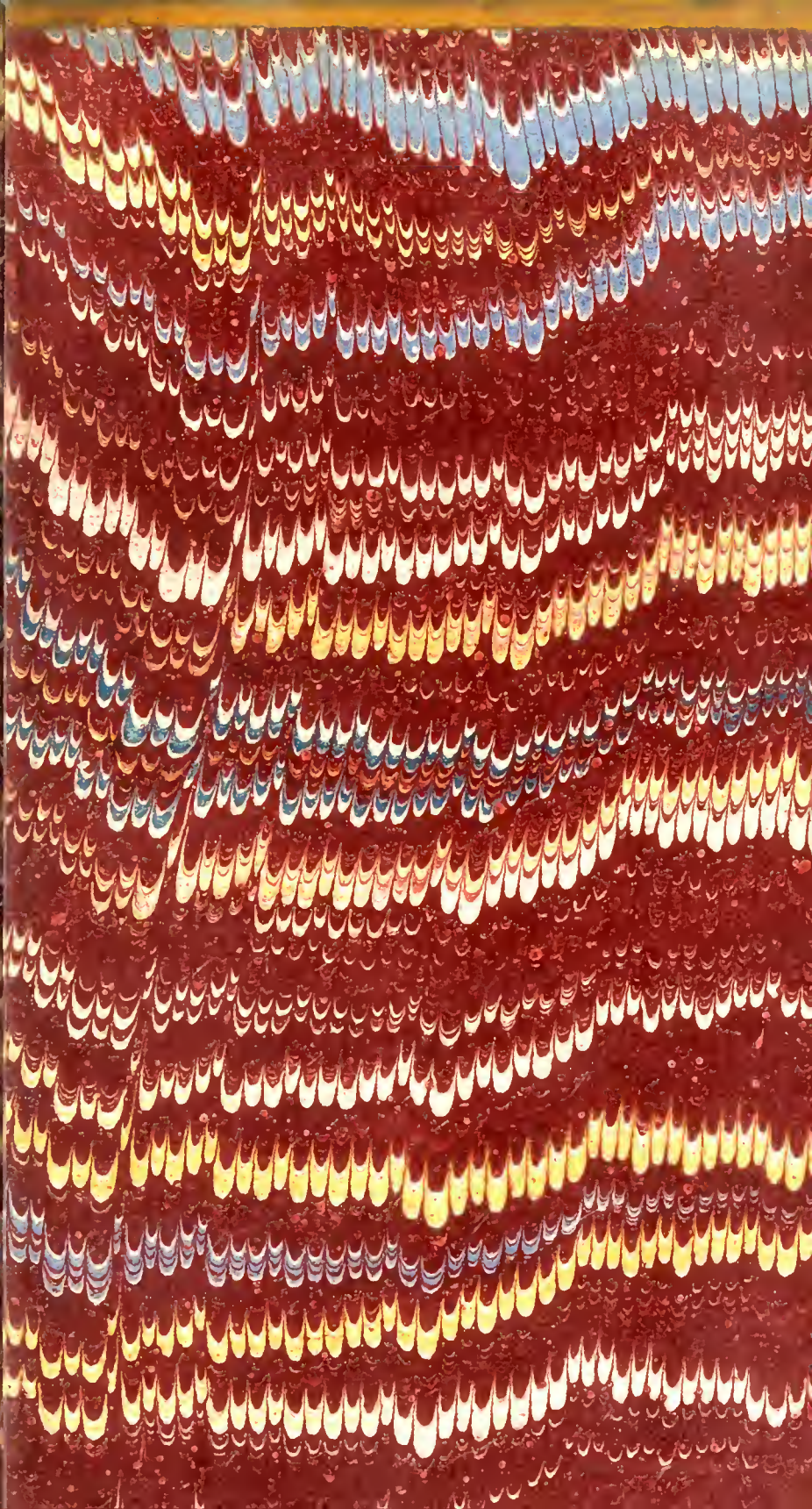
Before the French fashions acquired an ascendancy, both sexes had either national or provincial costumes, in whole regions, or at least in each province or great city. These national costumes disappeared in the same proportion as knowledge and the spirit of society were diffused among the different nations of our division of the globe. This gradual discontinuance of national costumes which kept pace with the progress of cultivation, might almost warrant the conclusion that the ancient uniformity in dress is incompatible with the present polished state of the European nations; and that it would be difficult, if not utterly impossible to compel a whole nation, or the different classes of a nation, to adopt the same fashions in dress. If, however, such a measure were practicable, it would prove the most effectual expedient for restraining the rage for fashion and the

necessity of following its dictates. Modern fashions are more expensive than the ancient love of pomp. The incessant alterations in the petty appendages of dress cost more than dress itself; and the fashions of clothes often come to more than the stuff of which those clothes are made. Fashion ruins many families of the higher and middling classes; and to many more the inevitable necessity of obeying its caprices is highly oppressive. It is probably among the lower classes, however, that fashion does the greatest mischief. By the fashionable dresses of female domestics, who owe their finery to the liberality of their lovers, such an emulation is excited in other persons of the same class, that, if industry and economy will not assist them to rival the objects of their envy, they make no scruple to tread in their steps. Whenever the maid-servants of persons belonging to the middling classes begin to dress better and more fashionably than their mistresses and their daughters, it is high time for the masters of families to make every possible effort to place the latter at least on a par with the servants in that respect, or it is ten to one that their wives and daughters endeavour to obtain of lovers

what is denied them by their husbands and fathers. Fashion and vanity are incontestably among the principal causes of the corruption of morals among the lower classes. Can this great evil be corrected by sumptuary laws and regulations relative to dress? I very much doubt it. On the other hand, I hope that the progressive illumination of the superior classes will reduce the empire of fashion within its natural limits; and that their example will then induce the lower ranks to follow what is good, with the same eagerness as they have hitherto shewn to copy what is bad.

The southern nations have never been so much addicted to fashion as those of the middle and the north of Europe. Neither the French nor the English fashions ever extended over all Italy, and still less penetrated to every part of Spain and Portugal. France has, in a great measure, lost, and will probably continue more and more to lose her ancient ascendancy in the empire of fashion. In England fashion reigns with more arbitrary sway, and creates and destroys more rapidly than ever. The spirit of British fashion has even triumphed over the French, and has produced this advan-

tageous change, that neatness and cleanliness in dress are now preferred to dirty pomp, and the quality and fineness of stuffs to tawdry edging, lace, and decorations. For the rest, the English are not so happy in the invention of new and elegant fashions as in the contrivance of the conveniencies of life, and the improvement of the useful arts. It has not reflected any great credit on us Germans, that we have hitherto been the first and the most faithful followers of foreign fashions: neither would it do us extraordinary honour if we were to become patterns to those whom we have been accustomed to take for our models. Seek continually what is commendable and excellent. If ye cannot discover it yourselves be not ashamed to borrow it of others. But prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good.

THE END.

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